



THE
GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

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THE
BOOKS
OF THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS
PROVED TO BE
CANONICAL,
AND
THEIR VERBAL INSPIRATION
MAINTAINED AND ESTABLISHED;
WITH
AN ACCOUNT OF THE INTRODUCTION AND CHARACTER
OF THE
APOCRYPHA.

BY
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THIRD EDITION, MUCH ENLARGED.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Canon and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures are subjects of the highest importance to every Christian. The Divine Books contain the only information with respect to the salvation of sinners ; and the duties, privileges, and hopes of the heirs of heaven. All that can be known of the mind of God, and of the future state of man, must be learned from them. The theories of men with respect to the things of God, and reasonings respecting revealed subjects, grounded on any other foundation but the divine declarations, are not only fallacious as far as concerns their immediate objects, but prevent an accurate acquaintance with the ways of God, by opening innumerable devious paths, which deceitfully promise to lead to heavenly knowledge.

This is true if the internal cause be admitted; but not otherwise.

The Bible not only contains things that are divinely accredited as true, but it contains all the truth on divine subjects that is accessible to man.^x Hence every thing that respects the particular books composing the Canon, and the inspiration of these books, is of the liveliest interest to every Christian. Whatever tends to invalidate the authority of any particular book of the Canon, or to add others to the number, ought to be met with the most decided opposition, as threatening to rob us of the most precious revealed truth, or to impose on us the traditions of men as the commandments of God. To reject a book whose authenticity rests on the authority of the Canon, is not only to give up the portion of divine truth which such book contains, but to take away the evidence of every other book standing on the same authority. If one book of the Canon is given up, how shall any other be retained on the authority of that Canon? Is it a light thing to admit a principle that unsettles the evidence of every book of the Bible? Is it an innocent thing to charge as superfluous, unimportant, unholy, or unwor-

thy of God, any thing that there is authority to hold as his word ? What, then, shall be said of those Christians, who have not only discovered an unbecoming facility in surrendering parts of the book of God, but have laboured with the most strenuous exertions to unsettle the Canon, and have availed themselves of every resource, with which a perverse ingenuity could supply them, to degrade some of the books that are as fully authenticated as any in that sacred collection ?

In like manner, to recognise a book, not authenticated by the Canon, is to invalidate the authority of the Canon, and to lay a foundation for the admission of unaccredited books to an indefinite extent. It is obvious, that those who do so cannot be assured of the truths which they receive, nor that they have all revealed truths in the Bible. Such a mode of proceeding degrades the Word of God, unsettles the faith of the Christian, and greatly mars his edification and comfort.

The inspiration of the Scriptures is a thing of equal importance with the authority of the Canon. If God is not the author of them, in

the fullest and most complete sense of that term, we cannot receive them as the word of God.^{*} The Scriptures so plainly assert their inspiration, that it is matter of astonishment that any who profess to believe them should have denied it. Yet many have contrived to hold the word, and to deny the thing itself. In this way, they perhaps hide even from themselves the boldness of their unhallowed speculations. That inspiration extends to words as well as to matter, is a thing so obvious, that it never could have been questioned, if those who deny it had not misled themselves by their vain reasonings on the subject, or taken the contrary for granted without enquiry, on the authority of others. A writing inspired by God self-evidently implies in the very expression, that the words are the words of God^{*}; and the common impression of mankind coincides with this most entirely. That the inspiration is in the matter, not in the words; that one part of Scripture is written with one kind or degree of inspiration, and another part with another kind or degree, is contrary to the phraseology, and totally with-

Certainly not.

Compare page 98.

But according to your own shewing elsewhere, God is not the author of them "in the fullest and most complete sense of that term", for you say of some parts, that God dictated them to be inserted "not as his words", but as the words of others.

out foundation in any part, of the Scriptures themselves, and never could have suggested itself as a natural meaning of the word. This unholy invention is the figment of an ill-employed ingenuity, either to invalidate some Scripture truths, or to repel some objections, which appeared otherwise unanswerable. It is an expedient to serve a purpose, and as little to be approved, when it is used to defend the declarations of God, as when it is used to overturn them. Yet degrading views both of the Canon and Inspiration of the Scriptures too generally prevail; and the writers of most influence on the public mind, instead of correcting these errors, lend all their influence to their establishment.

The plenary or verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is not only established by the most express passages in the way of direct authority, but it is a matter of no light consideration that there are no opposing passages on the other side. Hardly an error ever was maintained, but what could press some passage of the Word of God into its service, by the use of torture. Indeed, very many im-

portant truths of the divine word are not without their difficulties, from passages that afford a handle to human ignorance and human depravity. While these are always capable of a solution in perfect accordance with the truths to which, at first sight, they may appear to be opposed, they prove a test of our submission to the divine wisdom. They manifest the childlike disposition of the people of God; but they are as gins and snares to the wisdom of this world, and the wise are taken by them in their own craftiness. As the contiguity of the Canaanites manifested the unbelief of the people of Israel; so these passages in the divine wisdom bring out into open avowal the enmity of men to the truth of God. But the inspiration of the Scriptures in the words as well as in the matter, is not opposed by any difficulty of this kind; and the authors of the low and derogatory view of

the word of God, which ascribes to it different degrees of inspiration, cannot plead a single passage that will afford them even the shadow of support.[†] Their doctrine is but a theory—a theory in opposition to the most express

*is assertion
efficiently evinced
the boldness
it does not
much for
piousness of
Haldane.*

*a great
number of passages cited by Dr. Adam Clarke, from Whitby,
in the appendix to Noble's Plenary Inspiration, page 31.*

assertions of Scripture, and not countenanced by the allegation of a single text.

Whence comes the Bible? is a question in every way worthy of the deepest attention of the Christian. The grounds on which is rested the happiness of this world, and of the world to come, can never be too deeply examined. The title-deeds to so immense an inheritance are worthy of the constant researches of the life of man.

To establish with the utmost precision what are the books belonging to the Canon of Scripture, to fix the brand of reprobation on all false pretenders to the honour of inspiration, and to vindicate the writings of the Old Testament and the New, as the words of the Spirit of God, can at no period be a useless labour. But present circumstances add greatly to this importance, and recent events have discovered not only ignorance on these subjects, where knowledge might have been expected, but opposition even from the friends of the Gospel. It is much to be regretted, that unscriptural opinions concerning these subjects have long been entertained, and have of late been advo-

cated by persons, who might have been expected to be the most zealous in opposing their progress. The Christian public are in the greater danger from the infection of this heresy, that it is propagated by persons whom they have long been accustomed to regard as among the brightest ornaments of true religion. Had these dangerous opinions made their appearance in the works of Socinians, Christians would have stood on their guard against them. But when the Canon is unsettled, and verbal inspiration is denied by men who profess to hold the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, many will be misled. If, then, we are commanded to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, it is surely our duty to contend for the Canon and Inspiration of the Bible, by which only that faith can be ascertained. Our reverence for the Bible depends on our full conviction of the plenary inspiration of the Apostles and Prophets, and our being satisfied that our Bible exclusively contains their writings. On these subjects the mind of every Christian should be fully informed and firmly esta-

blished. Just views respecting them exalt our conceptions of the perfection of the Holy Scriptures, and tend to make us better acquainted with their contents. The opposite views have a contrary tendency in a very high degree.

While the natural opposition of fallen man to God leads some to open and avowed infidelity, it operates on a still greater number in the way of indifference to religion. It leads them to be satisfied with very lax and general views on a subject to which they are indisposed, but which they dare not altogether neglect. Under the influence of this indifference many entertain no fixed views in regard to the Bible. They admit that the Scriptures contain a revelation from God, and that many parts of them are, therefore, entitled to our utmost reverence; but they do not perceive that all parts of the Bible, whether history, prophecy, praise, or precepts, are so many integral and connected parts of one great whole, intimately connected with the cross of Christ, which forms the centre of revelation, without reference to which no part can be

understood. They may read the history of Israel, they may believe the facts recorded, and yet remain completely unacquainted with the instruction conveyed. They may admire the Proverbs of Solomon as the dictates of the wisest of men ; they may derive benefit from them in the regulation of their conduct in the world ; while their souls cleave to the dust, and they are treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath. They may read the predictions of the desolation of Tyre and Babylon ; they may acknowledge the proof which these afford of the divine foreknowledge, while they remain utterly ignorant of the nature of that kingdom, to the establishment of which all such events were subservient, and with which every part of revelation is closely and inseparably connected. But when God opens the understanding to understand the Scriptures ; when men are made to know that all the prophets, both in the history of the past and the predictions of the future, bear witness to Christ, and that every circumstance recorded in the word of God, is a part of the testimony of Jesus, then

they are led to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God;" to pray with the Psalmist, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;" and with the Apostle, they follow on to apprehend Christ Jesus, the Lord, in the diligent study of every part of the word of God.

This naturally produces just views on the subject of inspiration. Unless the mind be misled by false teaching, or perverted by some unscriptural theory, it puts an end to idle and impious speculations about supernatural influence being unnecessary, when the sacred penmen are speaking of "common or civil affairs;" and about their mentioning "common occurrences or things in an incidental manner as any other plain and faithful men might do." We behold the word of God composed of many parts, but forming one grand connected system, like a building, so admirably constructed, that every stone increases its beauty and stability, and not one of which could be removed without injury. We behold the wisdom of God in employing so many persons to labour in distant

ages, and in different departments, producing in their various compositions a revelation of his will, complete in all its parts, and distinguished by the most perfect unity, without the shadow of discrepancy, redundancy, or deficiency. From not perceiving this, some attach different degrees of authority to different parts of Scripture. In the same way, many prefer the discourses of Jesus to the other portions of the New Testament, although, when about to leave the world, he informed his Apostles that there were many things which at present they could not bear, but which he would afterwards communicate to them by the teaching of his Spirit. According to his promise, he endued them with power from on high, and consequently in their writings we have the completion of divine revelation, the exhibition of the great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and which he more fully explained by speaking in his Apostles, 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

It is the object of the following pages to exhibit the abundant evidence by which the authenticity of the books of the Old and New Testaments is confirmed, and to prove that the

inspiration to which the Scriptures lay claim, is in the fullest sense plenary in every part of them, extending both to the ideas, and to the words^x in which these ideas are expressed. Hence the Scripture is described as the Word of God, and the words of which it is composed, are represented as proceeding out of his mouth. This language is conclusive on the subject, and by directing the sacred writers to employ it, God has ascribed to himself whatever is written in the Bible, and requires all to listen to HIS WORD with the utmost reverence. Ish. 1, 2, 20.

x
See page
98

Two editions of this publication have already been sent into the world, but the present is greatly enlarged. An account is added of the Apocryphal writings, in which a view is given of the reasons that forbid their being received along with the word of God. Their usurpation of the place they have long occupied in the estimation of many, is traced to its origin; and their presumptuous claims to inspiration, or to any authority, are exploded. This is the more necessary, as many are but little acquainted with the manner in which these forgeries have obtained the situation they hold in

the Bibles of Roman Catholics and even of Protestants, or with the impiety of their contents. It is proved that the Apocrypha is not a part of God's word, and that instead of being a book of useful though uninspired instruction, it is a book of imposture and destructive delusion.

A work has just appeared from the pen of Mr Carson, in which the false theories of inspiration exhibited in some late publications, are triumphantly refuted.* The reader who desires to examine this important subject will find it advantageous to read that work in connexion with this publication. They both refer to it in different points of view. The one is in proof, the other in reply. The one aims at exhibiting the evidence, and the other answers objections ; and in order to have at once

* " The Theories of Inspiration of the Rev. Daniel Wilson, Rev. Dr Pye Smith, and the Rev. Dr Dick, proved to be erroneous ; with Remarks on the Christian Observer, and Eclectic Review. By Alexander Carson, A. M. minister of the gospel. Sold by W. Whyte and Co., Edinburgh ; T. Hamilton and Co., London ; and W. Carson, Dublin ;" &c. &c.

a view of the evidence drawn from Scripture of the doctrine of inspiration, and a solution of the most plausible evils against it, both should be perused. A question of such importance demands full consideration, and if ingenuity has exerted its utmost efforts to shroud this subject in darkness, detail ought not to be thought tedious in restoring light and order. These publications together will, it is hoped, enlarge the views and fortify the convictions of Christians respecting the divine origin and absolute perfection of the Holy Scriptures, and will prove that those who recognise distinctions in the inspiration of the word of God, or who make concessions that virtually subvert it, are chargeable with no slight evil. After candidly weighing what is advanced, they will have reason to conclude that in the Bible they possess the whole word of God, and nothing but his word. In the appendix it will be grateful to them to observe, that the views of the inspiration of the Bible maintained in these publications are not new. They will see, by a number of quotations, that, though too much neglected, and even opposed by many,

the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures has been, from the earliest times, the faith of some of the greatest ornaments of the church of God.

THE
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OLD TESTAMENT.

THE Bible, which contains the account of the origin, progress, and nature of the Christian religion, is the production, not of one period, but of many ages. The writers of it succeeded each other, during the space of above 1500 years. The Scriptures of the Old Testament far exceed, in antiquity, all other historical records. Moses, who wrote the first five books, lived more than 1000 years before Herodotus, the father of Grecian history; and rather earlier than the time of Herodotus, Ezra and Nehemiah completed the historical part of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The longevity of the first generations of men, which accelerated the population of the world from a single

* A genuine book is one written by the person whose name it bears, as the author of it. An authentic book is one that relates matters of fact, as they really happened.

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pair, rendered a written revelation, between the fall of man and the promulgation of the law at Sinai, less necessary, as the knowledge of the Divine will was, during that period, transmitted from one age to another, by very few individuals. From Adam to Moses, although a space of about 2500 years, it passed through only four intermediate persons. In all that time, God made himself known by visible interpositions and signs, as in the cases of Cain and Babel, and held direct communication with prophets, who were revered as such by the people among whom they lived, which preserved his truth from being corrupted. Thus it was sufficiently early in the days of Moses, permanently to record that authentic revelation, which was then delivered. But, at that period, when the age of man was reduced nearly to its present limits, God separated a people from the nations, and gave them such an establishment, that full security was afforded for preserving entire his written word.

Moses, who, at the giving of the law, acted the part of a mediator between God and the people of Israel, was called up to Mount Sinai, where he received those laws and institutions that were then enjoined. These, together with a history of the creation, and of whatever, from the beginning, was necessary for the instruction of the people of God, were committed by him to writing, in five books, and deposited in the tabernacle by the side of the ark.

These five books, called the Book of the Law, and also known by the name of the Pentateuch, (or five volumes,) constituted the first part of the sacred records, and include the history of about 2550 years.

The law was read every Sabbath-day in the synagogues, and again solemnly every seventh year. The king was required to copy it, and the people were commanded to teach it to their children, and to bear it as "signs upon their hands, and frontlets between their eyes." The remaining books* of the Old Testament, composed by different writers, carry the history of Israel beyond the Babylonish captivity, and contain the messages of a succession of prophets till 420 years before the coming of Christ, when, at the distance of about 1030 years from Moses, Malachi, the last of the prophets, wrote.

The books which compose the Old Testament Scriptures, were held by the Jews, in every age, to be the genuine works of those persons to whom they are ascribed; and they have also been universally and exclusively, without any addition or exception, considered by them as written under the immediate influence of the Spirit of God. They preserved them with the greatest veneration; and, at the same time, carefully guarded against receiving any apocryphal or uninspired books. While the Jews were divided into various sects, which stood in the most direct opposition to each other, there never was any difference among them respecting the authority of the sacred writings.

The five books of Moses were also preserved by the Samaritans, who received them nearly 700 years before the coming of Christ. Whatever disagree-

* The exact time when the book of Job was written is not known.

ment, in other respects, subsisted between them and the Jews, and however violent their enmity against each other, they perfectly united in admitting the authenticity and inspiration of the law of Moses, which they both adopted as their religious rule. In addition to all this, about 280 years before the Christian era, the whole of the Old Testament was translated into Greek; a language which, from the time of Alexander's conquests, was commonly understood by the nations of the world. *Thus, Jews, Samaritans, and all the civilized world, had access to these sacred books*, which prevented the possibility of their being either corrupted or altered without its being generally known.

We are assured by Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was born about five years after the death of Christ, and who lived in the time of the Apostles, that the Jews acknowledged no books as Divine, but twenty-two. "We have not," he says, "an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from, and contradicting one another, (as the Greeks have,) but only twenty-two Books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be Divine. And of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws, and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of 3000 years. But as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes King of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four Books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the

conduct of human life. It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time : And how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation, is evident by what we do ; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one hath been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them ; but it is become natural to all Jews, immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these Books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them." —Josephus, ed. 1784, vol. ii. 361. The Books here referred to are precisely the same that from the beginning have been received by Christians, and that are still acknowledged by the modern Jews, concerning whose undivided attachment to them, all that is here asserted by Josephus is verified to the present day.

The authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures, against which *there is no contradictory testimony*, is confirmed by many collateral evidences of customs, traditions, and natural appearances, which have been collected from every part of the world. It is likewise supported by all the notices to be found respecting them in the most ancient Heathen historians. Josephus appeals to the public records of different nations, and to a great number of books extant in his time, but now lost, as indisputable evidence, in the opinion of the Heathen world, for the truth of the most remarkable events related in his History, the account of the early periods

* Yet our Lord says express-
that they did not believe those
which must
that they did
believe him ac-
cording to the ju-
per sense of his
words. John 5
And in the same
manner how
true is it of Ch-
istians in the
next day that
they do not be-
lieve the words
of the Lord.

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of which he professes to have taken principally from the Pentateuch. Porphyry, one of the most acute and learned of the early enemies of Christianity, admitted the genuineness of the Pentateuch, and acknowledged that Moses was prior to the Phœnician Sanchoniathon, who lived before the Trojan war. He even contended for the truth of Sanchoniathon's account of the Jews, from its coincidence with the Mosaic history. Nor was the genuineness of the Pentateuch denied, by any of the numerous writers against the Gospel, in the first four centuries, although the Christian fathers constantly appealed to the history and prophecies of the Old Testament in support of the divine origin of the doctrines which they taught. The power of historical truth compelled the Emperor Julian, whose favour to the Jews appears to have proceeded only from his hostility to the Christians, to acknowledge, that persons instructed by the Spirit of God once lived among the Israelites ; and to confess that the books which bore the name of Moses were genuine ; and that the facts which they contained were worthy of credit.

Of the genuineness and authenticity of their Scriptures, the Jews had the strongest evidence, which produced a corresponding impression. The five books of Moses are addressed to the Israelites as his contemporaries, and had they not been both genuine and authentic, they never could have been imposed on his countrymen, whose religion and government were founded upon them. The transactions of their own times were narrated by the several writers of the other books, and the truth of their respective

histories was witnessed by all their countrymen who lived at the same period. The plainest directions were given for ascertaining the truth of the mission of all who declared themselves prophets, those who were sent being furnished with ample credentials, while every one who pretended to deliver the messages of God without these credentials was to be put to death. Deut. xviii. 20. And although false prophets did arise, and for a time obtained a degree of influence, their wickedness was exposed by the failure of their predictions, or by the judgments inflicted on them as in the case of Hananiah. From the miracles, too, which the people of Israel constantly witnessed, as well as the fulfilment of the prophecies which was all along taking place, they had complete proof that the true prophets wrote by the authority of God himself. During the whole period from Moses to Malachi, a succession of them was raised up, under whose direction the word of God was infallibly distinguished from all counterfeits; and by their means, in connexion with the visible interference of the God of Israel in punishing those who made the people trust in a lie, the Scriptures were preserved pure and unadulterated.

These books are handed down to us by that nation, whose history they record with an impartiality for which we shall seek in vain in the annals of any other historians. There are here no national prejudices, and no attempts at embellishment. The history of the people of Israel is recorded by the uncompromising hand of truth. Their ingratitude, and their obstinacy, are alike exposed; their sinful incredulity on many occasions is published; their virtues are not magnified,

and their courage is not extolled. This history contains an account, not in confused traditions, but in minute detail of time, place, and circumstances, of great public facts transacted in the presence of the whole people, in which they were actors, and of which permanent memorials were instituted at the time when they occurred.* These facts involved their submission to a religion entirely different from that of all the surrounding nations, which laid them under great and painful restraints, and to laws and institutions, which, while they secluded them from the rest of mankind, exposed them to their utmost detestation and contempt. Had such facts never taken place, they could not at any period have been forced upon the belief of a whole nation, so as to be ever afterwards acknowledged by them, *without one dissenting voice*. It is a striking singularity in their laws, that they were promulgated not from time to time, but in one written code, and were permanently binding both on the rulers and the people, never to be in any respect either altered or added to.

* Mr Leslie, who writes on Deism, in proving the authenticity of the books of Moses, lays down the following rules as a test of truth, which all meet in these books. Wherever they do meet, what they refer to, he affirms, cannot be false. On the contrary, they cannot possibly meet in any imposture whatever.

“ 1. That the matter of fact be such, that men’s outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it.

“ 2. That it be done publicly in the face of the world.

“ 3. That not only public monuments be kept in memory of it, but some outward actions be performed.

Nor are the Jews alone referred to as witnesses of some of the most important of those transactions, the scene of which is not laid in an obscure corner, but in the midst of the most civilized nations of the world. The entrance of their ancestors into Egypt; their continuance for centuries, and increase there; the manner in which they were oppressed; the causes of their being suffered to depart, and the awful catastrophe which accompanied that departure; are facts in which the people of Egypt were equally implicated with themselves. Their subsequent continuance during forty years in an uncultivated desert; their invasion of Palestine; the long continued contest, and their final occupation of that land,—were public and permanent facts, brought home to the inhabitants of

“ 4. That such monuments, and such actions, or observances, be instituted, and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

“ The two first rules make it impossible for any such matter of fact to be imposed on men at the time when said to be done, because every man’s eyes and senses would contradict it. The two last rules render it impossible that the matter of fact should be invented and imposed some time after.”

After proving, in a variety of ways, that all his four rules meet in the books of Moses, he observes:—“ You may challenge the whole world to show any action that is fabulous, which has all the four rules or marks before mentioned. *It is impossible.*—I do not say that every thing which wants these four marks is false, but that *nothing can be false which has them all.*”

It is said that Dr Middleton endeavoured for twenty years to find out some pretended fact to which Mr Leslie’s four rules could be applied, but without success.

that country, who lived in the centre of the civilized world. The train of the history too, which, as well as the style and tendency of all the separate books, is entirely consistent with itself, proceeds in so uniform a manner, and one thing so naturally rises out of another, that unless on the supposition of what goes before, that which follows cannot be accounted for. This remark holds good with respect to the state of the Jews even to this day; and all that is recorded is necessary to explain their present unexampled situation. Impressed with an unalterable conviction of their divine origin, they have, at the expense of every thing dear to men, tenaciously adhered, as far as circumstances permit, to the outward form of the religion, the laws, and the institutions engrossed in their sacred records. And although they themselves are condemned by these books, and know that they ^(the books) are employed to support a system which they mortally hate, they have, under all circumstances, down to the present hour, continued to be faithful depositories of the Old Testament Scriptures.

“The honour and privilege,” says Bishop Cosin, in his history of the Canon of the Holy Scripture, “which the posterity of Jacob some time had, above all the world besides, was to be that peculiar people of God, to whom he was pleased to make his laws and his Scriptures known; nor was there then any other church but theirs, or any other oracles of God, than what were committed to them. For they had all that were then extant, and all written in their own language.

“These they divided into three several classes,

whereof the first comprehended THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES; the second ALL THE PROPHETS; and the third *those* WRITINGS which they call the *Chethubim*, or BOOKS that were written by the holy men of God, who were not so properly to be ranked among the Prophets: From whom both the *five Books of Moses* and these *Chethubim* were distinguished, because [†] *howsoever they were all written by the same prophetic spirit and instinct*, which the *Books of the Prophets* were; yet *Moses* having been their special lawgiver, and the *writers of these other books* having had no public mission or office of *Prophets*, (for some of them were *Kings*, and others were *great and potent persons* in their times,) they gave either of them a *peculiar class* by themselves.

[†] *An assumption.*

“ In this division as they reckoned *Five Books* in the first class, so in the second, they counted *Eight*, and in the third *Nine*; *Two and Twenty* in all; in number equal to the letters of their *Alphabet*, and as fully comprehending all that was then needful to be known and believed, as the number of their letters did all that was requisite to be said or written. And hereof after this manner they made their enumeration.

The books of Moses	{ Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua,	}	V.
Four books of the former Prophets	{ Judges and Ruth, Samuel, 1. and 2. Kings, 1. and 2.	}	4
Four books of the latter Prophets	{ Isaiah, Jeremiah, and his Lamentations, Ezekiel, The book of the 12 lesser Prophets,	}	4
		}	VIII.

And the rest of the Holy Writers	{ King David's Psalter, King Solomon's Proverbs, His book of the Preacher, His Song of Songs, The book of Job, The book of Daniel, The books of Ezra and Nehemiah, The book of Esther, The book of Chronicles, 1. and 2. }	IX.
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 XXII.

“ Which last *Book of the Chronicles*, containing the sum of all their former histories, and reaching from the creation of the world to their return from *Babylon*, is a perfect *epitome of all the Old Testament*, and therefore not unfitly so placed by them, as that it concluded and closed up their whole BIBLE.”

“ Other *divisions* of these books were afterwards made, and the *order* of them was somewhat altered, (as in divers respects they may well be,) but the BOOKS were still the *same*; and as the *number* of them was never augmented, during the time of the Old Testament, so there were no *additional pieces* brought in, or set to any of them at all.”

“ It is generally received, that after the return of the Jews from their captivity in *Babylon*, all the BOOKS of the SCRIPTURE, having been revised by *Ezra*, (then their priest and their leader,) who digested them likewise into those several classes before rehearsed, were by him, and the Prophets of GOD that lived with him, consigned and delivered over to all posterity. But this is sure, that after his age, and the time of the prophet *Malachi*, (who was *one* among those that prophesied in that time,) there were no more *prophets* heard of among the Jews till the time

of St John the Baptist, and therefore no more prophetical and divine SCRIPTURES between them."

"The BOOKS then of the OLD TESTAMENT, such and so many as they were after the captivity of Babylon; in the time of *Esdras*, (*Ezra*,) the same and so many being accurately preserved by the *Jews*, and continuing among them unto the time of our *blessed Saviour* (as they do likewise still unto this very day) without any addition, imminution, or alteration, descended to the *Christians*."

Nothing then can be better authenticated than the canon* of the Old Testament, as we now possess it. We have the fullest evidence that it was fixed 280 years before the Christian era, when, as has been noticed, the Greek translation, called the Septuagint, was executed at Alexandria, the books of which were the same as in our Bible. And as no authentic records of a more ancient date are extant, it is impossible to ascend higher in search of testimony. As held by the Jews in the days of Jesus Christ, their canon was the same as when that translation was made, and it has since then been retained by them without any variation, though by separating books formerly united, they increase their number. The integrity and divine original of these Scriptures are thus authenticated by a whole nation,—the most ancient that exists,—who have preserved them and borne their testimony to them from

* The word canon signifies a rule or a law. Hence the books of the Holy Scriptures taken together are called the canon, as designed by God to be the rule of our faith and practice.

the time of Moses down to the present day. That nation was selected by God himself to be his witnesses, Isaiah, xliii. 10., to whom he committed "the lively oracles," and amidst all their wickedness he prevented them from betraying their trust, the Jews never having given admission into their canon to any other books but to those which by his prophets and servants were delivered to them.

In addition to the unanimous testimony of the Jewish nation to the genuineness and authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures, of which they had been constituted the depositaries, we have the decisive attestation of the Son of God. Jesus Christ, who appeared on earth 1500 years after Moses, the first of the prophets, and 400 years after Malachi, the last of them, bore his testimony to the sacred canon as held by the Jews in his time, and recorded it by his holy Apostles. Among all the evils with which he charged the Jews, he never once intimated that they had in any degree corrupted the canon either by addition, or diminution, or alteration. Since with so much zeal he purged the Temple, and so often and sharply reprehended the Jews for perverting the true sense of the Scriptures, much more, we may be assured, would he have condemned them, if they had tampered with, or vitiated, these sacred writings; but of this, he never accused them. By often referring to the "Scriptures," which he declared "cannot be broken," the Lord Jesus Christ has given his full attestation to the whole of them as the unadulterated word of God. "*Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have*

eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Here he warrants, in the most explicit manner, the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures. He told the Jews that they *made the word of God of none effect through their traditions*.^{*} By calling them the WORD OF GOD, he indicated that these Scriptures proceeded from God himself. In his conversation with the disciples going to Emaus, when, "*beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*," he gave the most express testimony to every one of the books of the Old Testament canon. Just before his ascension, he said to his Apostles, "*These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me*." By thus adopting the common division of the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, which comprehended all the Hebrew Scriptures,^{*} (to which division Josephus, as we have seen, refers,) he ratified and sanctioned with his authority the canon of the Old Testament, as it was received by the Jews; and by declaring that these books contained prophecies which must be fulfilled, he established their divine inspiration, since God alone can enable men to foretell future events.⁺

The same testimony is repeated by the Apostles, who constantly appeal to the Jewish Scriptures as "*the lively oracles*" of God. Referring to the whole of the Old Testament, Paul declares, that "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*." The term

+ This is an express reference not to the whole Bible, nor even to any whole book of it, but to the 5th canon of the canon of the Old Testament, see Matt. 15-17, Mark 7-13.

* This is very clearly shown to be an incorrect assertion—see Appendix to Noble's "Plenary Inspiration"—page 19

o Josephus refers to the books, but to this division of them in the passage referred to—page

+ Did the declaration on that some books contained prophecies establish in the same authority and inspiration other books which do not?

The third part in his division contains but "four" books, and these he describes as containing "*Hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life*." Now as in these four books the former part of the description belongs only to the Psalms "it is evident that the title 'Hymns or Psalms' was then, as now, limited to the sacred

“Scripture,” or “the Scriptures,” (the writings,) was then, as it is still, appropriated to the written word of God, as both the Old Testament and the New are now, by way of eminence and distinction, called the *Bible*, or the Book. The same Apostle recognises the entire canon of the Jews, when he says, “*unto them were committed the oracles of God.*” The fidelity of the Jews to their trust is here asserted by Paul; and those to whom he writes are required to acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old Testament as of divine authority. While the Apostles affirmed that they spoke “*not the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,*” they uniformly referred to the Old Testament Scriptures, as of equal authority with those of the New Testament, both of which, as commissioned by their divine master, they have delivered over to the Christian Church as “the word of God.” Indeed, so manifestly is it the object of the Apostles to establish the divine authority of the Old Testament, that though they were as fully inspired and accredited as the ancient prophets, or former servants of God, and could establish the truth of any thing they taught by the miracles which they performed, yet they reasoned out of the Old Testament Scriptures, proving and alleging from them the truth of what they declared. Instead of professing to give authority to what was written in them, they uniformly appealed to those writings as authority equal to their own.⁺ Paul declares, that the Gospel of God, to which he was separated as an Apostle, was that “*which he had promised afore by his prophets in the*

+ It is granted that they did so appeal; but to maintain the argument for the equal authority of the books in the three divisions, it is necessary that they should have made a similar appeal to all. But how stands the fact? I have very carefully examined the whole of the New Testament, and find what is known even to a superficial reader, that the apostles all appealed to the Law.

Holy Scriptures.”—Rom. 1, 2.* Here, where Paul asserts his Apostolic commission, he gives the whole weight of his Apostolic authority to the ancient Scriptures, which he denominates “Holy writings,” in which God, he affirms, had recorded his promises by his prophets. When the same Apostle declares, that “*whatsoever things were written afore time were*

* Much important matter is contained in this verse. The Apostle here tacitly repels the accusation of the Jews, that the Gospel was a novel doctrine. He shows that the Old Testament is the promise of the New, and that the New is the fulfilment of the Old—by its prophecies which foretold a new covenant—by all that it promised concerning the Messiah—by all its legal institutions which contained in themselves the promises which they prefigured—by the whole economy of the law which prepared men for the reception of the Gospel—by all the revelations of grace and mercy which contained the Gospel in substance, and, consequently, promised its more full developement. He also repels the accusation, that the Apostles were enemies to Moses and the Prophets; showing, on the other hand, that there was a complete agreement betwixt them. He establishes the authority of the Prophets and the inspiration of the Scriptures, by declaring that it was God himself who spoke in them. He shows whence we are to take the true word of God and of his prophets, not from verbal tradition, which must be uncertain and fluctuating, but from the written word which is certain and permanent. He teaches that we ought constantly to have recourse to the Scriptures, for that all in religion which is not found in them, is really novel, although it may have been received for many ages; but that what is found there is really ancient, although men may have for a long time lost sight of it. Such are the great truths contained in this compendious verse.

N.B.

except to the *Palms* and *Daniel*,^B both of which are expressly quoted by our LORD himself, and *Daniel* is styled “a Prophet” there is not a single quotation from or reference to it in any one of the Evangelists: and in the Apostolic Epistles there are but four. One direct

is text does not appear inconsistent with the text. The text is written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope," he gives his attestation to the whole of the sacred writings, and proves that they exist entire; for he could not have said this if any of them had been lost, or had any additions been made to them.*

From the important connexion that subsists between the Old Testament and the New, the early Christian writers carefully examined the Jewish Scriptures, and have given distinct catalogues of these books, precisely the same as we now receive, and as they are still retained by the Jews. Melito, bishop

* It is true, that the sacred writers refer to other books that do not now exist, as of Iddo the seer; but they do not refer to them as canonical books, but as civil records of the kingdom, such as the reference to the civil records of Persia in the book of Esther. Were it even to be admitted that some epistles written by the Apostles have not come down to us, the fact would not imply that the Scriptures have lost an epistle, or a single word. There might have been hundreds of such inspired letters from the Apostles, without implying that ever they made a part of that collection that was designed by God to be a perfect and sufficient standard to all ages. This is said not from a conviction that there ever existed any inspired letters of the Apostles except those which we possess,* but they may have existed in any number, without affecting the integrity of the canon, which some have weakly supposed would follow from the fact, if admitted.

* "Some," says Theodoret, "imagine Paul to have wrote an epistle to the Laodiceans, and accordingly produce a certain forged epistle (so entitled); but the holy Apostle does not say τὴν πρὸς Λαοδικεῖας, the epistle to the Laodiceans, but τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας, the epistle from the Laodiceans."

first occurs Heb. 12.5 & 6. — 1 Pet. 4. 8 — 2 Pet. 2. 22. Not one of these four citations is introduced with "saith the LORD," or "saith the Scripture"; one commences "it is written," and another, "according to the true proverb,"

of Sardis, travelled in the second century into Palestine, on purpose to investigate the subject. His catalogue, which is preserved by Eusebius, contains the canonical books of the Old Testament, and no more. He names the several books, comprehending under the Book of Ezra, those of Nehemiah and Esther, to which they were commonly annexed, these three being by many accounted but one book. In the Jewish list, the Book of Nehemiah, only, was joined to Esther, as the Book of Lamentations was also annexed to Jeremiah; but the Book of Esther was never wanting in the canon of the Jews. The learned Origen, in the third century, gives a catalogue of the Jewish Scriptures, and says, "that the canonical books of Scripture contained in the Old Testament, are twenty and two in number, which the Hebrews have left unto us, according to the number of letters which they have in their alphabet." Athanasius also, in the fourth century, specifies the twenty-two books, and, naming them one after another, in the same order in which they now stand, says, that "they are received by the whole church." Hilary of Poitiers, and many writers in the same century, affirm that these books alone were received as canonical. This fact is confirmed by the Council of Laodicea, which met in the year 363, and gave a list of the twenty-two books, the same as have been received both by Jews and Christians.

Nothing can be more satisfactory and conclusive than all the parts of the foregoing evidence of the authenticity and integrity of the Canon of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Jews, to whom they

were first committed, never varied respecting them ; while they have been fully recognised by the Lord and his Apostles, and consequently, their authenticity is established by express revelation. And that we now possess them as thus delivered and authenticated, we have the concurrent testimony of the whole succession of the most distinguished early Christian writers, as well as of the Jews to this day, who, in every age, and in all countries, the most remote from one another, have constantly been in use of reading them in their synagogues.

The Scriptures of the Old Testament that have been thus so faithfully preserved, and so fully attested, contain the most satisfactory and convincing internal evidences of their truth. The character of God which they exhibit, nowhere delineated in the writings of any of the wisest of this world unenlightened by revelation, is such as carries with it its own confirmation. The character they give of man is verified in the history of every nation, and of each individual. The majesty, purity, and suitableness to the condition of man, of the doctrine they contain—the soundness and unrivalled excellence of the moral precepts they inculcate, and the glory of the succeeding dispensation which, towards their close, they point out with increasing clearness ; and all this confirmed and verified in the minutest particulars by the New Testament Scriptures—form a body of internal evidence, to which nothing but the deep corruption of the human heart, and the enmity of the carnal mind against God, could render any one insensible.

In course of time, and in the progress of that cor-

ruption in the churches which soon began to work, the sacred canon was defiled by the addition and even intermixture of other books, which, through the unfaithfulness of Christians, were admitted first as of secondary, and at length by many as of equal authority and consideration with those of which it was composed.

These books were called Apocryphal, and are supposed to have been so denominated from the Greek word *αποκρυπτω*, *to hide—to conceal*, which is expressive of the uncertainty and concealed nature of their origin. Who their authors were is not known. They were written subsequently to the cessation of the prophetic spirit in the time of Malachi, who closed his testimony by reminding the people of Israel of the authority of the law of Moses, and intimating that after himself, no prophet was to arise until the harbinger of the Messiah should appear. They were not written in the Hebrew language, in which all the books of the Old Testament were originally composed, with the exception of a few passages in Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezra, and Esther, which were written in Chaldee. Both Philo and Josephus, who flourished in the first century of the Christian era, are altogether silent concerning these spurious books, which were not contained in the Septuagint version, as set forth by the translators under Ptolemy:* and they form no part of those

* “ Of the *Greek Septuagint Bible*, (as it was first set forth in the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus,) *St Augustin* acknowledged no more *Books*, than what were then translated out of the *Hebrew copies* sent from *Jerusalem*, where neither

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sacred writings committed by God to the Jews, universally acknowledged and preserved by them entire. Above all, they have not received, like these holy writings, the attestation of Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, placing upon them the broad seal of heaven, who have never once quoted them.* A real and essential difference was constantly maintained by the early Christians between them and the canonical books; and it was not till the fourth century, when the churches had become exceedingly corrupt both in faith and practice, that they came to be permitted to appear with the canon.

The Apocryphal books, though not admitted by the first Christian writers, or churches, to have any authority in matters of faith, yet claim for themselves that authority, and even arrogate an equality with the sacred Scriptures, to which they were at length advanced by the church of Rome. They present themselves to the world as a part of the word of God, sometimes communicated immediately by himself, sometimes conveyed through the medium of angels, who are represented as standing before him.

Tobit nor *Judith*, nor any of that class, were to be found; for, (whatever *Genebrard* saith of his own head to the contrary,) those additional writings were brought in afterwards, and used only by the *Hellenist Jews* abroad at *Babylon* and *Alexandria*, from whom they were, in time following, commended to be read by the *Christians*, but never made equal with the other sacred Scriptures, as they are now set forth in the *Roman Septuagint* by the authority of *Sixtus Quintus*, which is an edition of that Bible, many ways depraved."—COSIN, p. 98.

The claim to inspiration is not more explicitly asserted by the writers of the Scriptures, than by some of the authors of the Apocryphal books. No higher demand for attention to their messages can be made by holy prophets and apostles, than when they affirm, "Thus saith the Lord." Yet this is the language in which men are addressed by these authors. They "*have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, SAYING, THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD, when the Lord hath not spoken.*" Ezek. xxii. 28.

In the second book of Esdras, the writer having commenced by declaring his lineage, affirms, "*The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Go thy way and show my people,*" &c. "Speak thou therefore unto them, saying, *Thus saith the Lord.*"—"Thus saith the Almighty Lord." This expression occurs four times in the first chapter. The second chapter opens with "*Thus saith the Lord,*" which in the course of that chapter is repeated nine times; and an angel is represented as speaking to the writer—"Then *the angel said unto me, go thy way, and tell my people what manner of things, and how great wonders of the Lord thy God thou hast seen.*" The rest of the book proceeds in the same strain, the author continuing to recite divine communications, made to himself as they had been to Moses.

In the book of Baruch, ii. 21, it is written, "*Thus saith the Lord.*"

In the book of Tobit a long interview with an angel is related, who affirms that he is one of the holy angels who go in and out before the glory of the

Holy One. "Now, therefore," says this angel, "give God thanks, for I go up to him that sent me, but write all things which are done in a book." Tobit, xii. 15. 20. God himself is often introduced by the Apocryphal writers, as communicating his will to them, and long speeches are ascribed to him.* Thus, the writers of the Apocrypha come as the bearers of messages from God, and as such they deliver them to mankind. They profess to communicate a portion of spiritual light, not borrowed from the Holy Scriptures, but immediately derived from the source of light. In every sense of the word, these books present themselves as a part of Divine Revelation, and if they were what they pretend to be, would be entitled to equal attention and reverence with the Holy Scriptures. Here, then, there is no medium, and the conclusion is inevitable :—*The Apocrypha is either an addition made to the Old Testament Scriptures by God himself, or it is the work of lying prophets.* This important question ought, therefore, to be considered by every Christian, and happily its solution is attended with no difficulty.

The Hebrew Scriptures come to us, as we have seen, with the fullest and most unequivocal attestations, that they are the oracles of God. On the other hand, if we examine the claim of the Apocryphal books, what do we observe? External evidence of their constituting a

* The absurd, unintelligible speeches, replete with trifling nonsense, ascribed to God in different places, prove the Apocrypha to be not only a human, but a most *impious* composition.

portion of divine revelation they have none. The question, then, is, on this ground alone, even were there no other to which we could appeal, for ever decided against them. But in order to produce the fullest conviction in the minds of all who know the truth as it is in Jesus, and to exclude every doubt, let us call another witness. We shall appeal, then, to the internal evidence of these writings. They contain within themselves their own condemnation. They are inconsistent, absurd, and contrary to the Word of God.

Viewing the Apocryphal writings as standing by the side of the Holy Scriptures, what character do they present? Do they offer any thing new, any thing that it might be of importance to know beyond what is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament? Do they teach us the way of God more perfectly? This will not be pretended by any one. Do their histories, which they present to us as true, comport with the dignity of holy writ? Do they possess internal marks of being authentic? Do they bear the character of a revelation from God, given for our instruction? So far is this from being the case, that many of their narrations are incredible and self-contradictory, and others irreconcilably at variance with the canonical Scriptures. They are defiled with a variety of errors, vanities, low conceits, and other faults incident to human nature and human infirmity. While their style, far different from the grave and chaste simplicity, or the divine and spiritual majesty, of the pure genuine word of God, is de-

formed with levity, and affectation of worldly wisdom and eloquence.

The Apocryphal books are not only replete with absurdities, superstitions, and falsehoods, in their narrations, but also with false doctrines directly opposed to the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, such as those of purgatory and prayers for the dead. But waving for the present every other charge on this head against them, let us turn our attention to a single point of the last importance, which involves an answer to that most momentous of all questions, *How shall man be just before God?* The Scriptures assure us, that if any man denies the doctrine of justification by faith without works, he becomes a debtor to do the whole law. What judgment then are we bound to form of a book which, openly contradicting this fundamental doctrine, and exhibiting another way of acceptance with God, makes void the whole plan of redemption? On this one point, then, of the explicit contravention by the Apocryphal books of the grand Scripture doctrine of justification, let them be tried;—that doctrine which is peculiar to the Christian religion, and unknown to every false one, which so remarkably illustrates and honours the finished work of the Redeemer—that doctrine of which God in his word has affirmed, that the man who perverts it, Christ shall profit him nothing.

It is written in the Apocrypha, “*Whoso honoureth his father maketh an atonement for his sins;*” and again, “*Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement for sins.*” Eccl. iii. 3–30. Sentiments more directly opposed to the doctrine of

the Holy Scriptures, more dishonourable to God, more contrary to his *holiness*, more derogatory to his *justice*, or more fraught with mortal poison, and more destructive to the souls of men, cannot be imagined.

The apostle Paul solemnly declared to the churches of Galatia, that if an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than that which he had preached unto them, he should be accursed. That very occurrence which the apostle here supposes, has, according to the Apocrypha, been realised. An angel from heaven, it affirms, has descended and declared that he came from God. "*I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One ;—not of any favour of mine, but by the will of our God I came.*" Tobit, xii. 15, 18. And that very doctrine does this angel explicitly contradict which the apostle so earnestly inculcated, accompanied with the solemn asseveration, that the curse of God should rest on any creature who dared to pervert it. "*It is better,*" says this angel, "*to give alms than to lay up gold : for alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin.*" Tobit, xii. 8, 9. If the man or angel who shall preach another gospel than that which the Bible contains, is pronounced by the Holy Ghost to be accursed, then must this awful denunciation apply to a book, which, pretending to record the message of an angel from heaven, teaches another gospel. On the Apocrypha, therefore, does this anathema rest.

The writers, then, of the Apocryphal books, who tread down the pastures, and foul the residue of the

waters with their feet, (Ezek. xxxiv. 18,) are, by confronting their doctrine with that of the holy Apostles, proved to be false prophets, against whom the wrath of God and many woes are denounced in Scripture. In opposition to their folly and wickedness, the Lord says, “ *The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*” Jer. xxii. 28. “ *The prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other Gods, even that prophet shall die.*” Deut. xviii. 20. These, and many other passages, are pointedly applicable to the Apocrypha. The writers of it may be justly termed prophets of deceit, and of their own heart, that prophesy lies in the name of the Lord, “ *saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.*” Jer. xxiii. 25. They have indeed imitated the style of the Scriptures, like the impostors concerning whom it is written, “ *Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.*” Jer. xxiii. 30. “ *Thus saith the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own*

spirit, and have seen nothing !—Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The Lord saith it ; albeit I have not spoken ? Therefore, thus saith the Lord God ; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord God. And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies.” Ezek. xiii. 3, 7, 9. The Bible then, and the Apocrypha, stand in direct opposition in their doctrine, and the latter is denounced by the former, and lies under its heaviest anathemas. The Apocryphal books, when delivered to the people as part of the divine oracles, are calculated by their absurdities to make men Deists or Atheists rather than Christians, and by their false doctrines to cause their readers to wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. As their introduction into the sacred canon has been the grand and crowning device of Satan for deceiving and corrupting the Christian world, and supporting the claims of the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, it will be proper to trace it from its origin.

Although all the Apocryphal books had been called, by the first Christian writers, spurious and supposititious, as not being inspired, but, on the contrary, containing doctrines which subvert the very foundations of the Gospel, and of a sinner’s acceptance before God ; yet some of them were at length selected as being supposed to be purer than the rest, and better entitled to be used in public readings and services, and on this account they received the name of Ecclesiastical or Church books. Of these there was even

formed a register or inferior canon, to exclude such as were reckoned more erroneous or faulty ; and this, in process of time, occasioned the name of canonical to be given in common to the writings which were truly divine, and to those which were reckoned the best of the Apocryphal books. The books of the first canon were esteemed to be divinely inspired, and to be the certain rule of faith. The Apocryphal books were reckoned to be instructive and useful, but were excluded from all authority in matters of faith, and in determination of controversies ; and when they came to be permitted to be read in the churches, the reader stood up in an inferior place.* It happened, however, in the course of years, that all these Canonical and Apocryphal books were conjoined and bound up together in one volume, for the greater facility of ecclesiastical use ; and for the purpose of uniting the historical parts with the historical, the proverbial with the proverbial, the doctrinal with the doctrinal, they were *intermingled* with one another, as at present in the Roman Catholic Bibles. But this practice obtained no sanction from the primitive churches, or the best and earliest of the Christian fathers, who, on the contrary, strongly objected against it ; and denied that

* Augustine, who lived in the fifth century, relates, that when the Book of Wisdom, and other writings of the same class, were publicly read in the church, they were given to the readers or inferior ecclesiastical officers, who read them in a place lower than that in which those universally acknowledged to be the canonical, were read by the bishops and presbyters in a more eminent and conspicuous manner.

these books were possessed of any authority. At the beginning, they were not acknowledged at all, nor admitted into any of the earlier catalogues of the Scriptures, and their introduction to that place which they afterwards unlawfully usurped, was slow and partial.

Justin,* who suffered martyrdom for the Christian faith, in the year 163, never, in any of his writings, cites a single passage of the Apocryphal books, nor makes the least mention of them in his conference with Trypho; while he speaks of it as a special work of Divine Providence, that the Jews had been faithful preservers of the Scriptures. None of these books appear in the catalogue of the Old Testament Scriptures of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, in the second century; nor in that of Origen, in the third century.

In the fourth century, Eusebius, who was Bishop of Cæsarea in the year 320, affirms, that from the time of Jesus Christ, there were no sacred books of Holy Scripture, besides those which had been received into the canon of the Jewish and Christian churches. He had read the Apocryphal books, and makes frequent quotations from them as the writings of particular authors, but never acknowledges any of them as a part of the canonical Scriptures. He declares that the authors of those books which bear the names of the Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, are writers contradicted, or not

* For a particular account of the writings of the early Christians, quoted in the following pages, see Lardner's works, where they will be found in their order.

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allowed, in the canon. When Porphyry adduced some objections against him from the new pieces annexed to the book of Daniel, he said that he was not bound to defend them, because they had no authority of Holy Scripture.

In the year 325, the first general council was held at Nice, at which were present 318 bishops, besides multitudes of other Christians, from all the provinces and churches of the Roman Empire. That in the Scriptures they made use of, "there were none of the controverted books, appears," says Bishop Cosin, p. 42, "by the evidence and attestation which both the Emperor, Eusebius, and Athanasius, (the chiefest actors in this council,) have hereunto given us."

Athanasius, who flourished in the year 340, enumerates the books of the Old and New Testament precisely as we now have them, and asserts that these alone are to be accounted the canonical and authentic sacred writings, admitted by the Lord and his Apostles, and recognised by all the fathers and teachers of the church since the Apostolic age. At the same time he reproves those who had intermixed a number of the Apocryphal books with the catalogue of the acknowledged books of the Old Testament.

"These things," says Cyril, who was Bishop of Jerusalem in the year 350, "we are taught by the divinely-inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. For there is one God of both Testaments, who in the Old Testament foretold the Christ, who was manifested in the New.—Read the Divine Scriptures, the two-and-twenty books of the Old Testament, which were translated by the seventy-two

interpreters — Read these two-and-twenty books, and have nothing to do with Apocryphal writings. These, and these only, do you carefully meditate upon, which we securely or openly read in the church. The Apostles and ancient bishops, governors of the church, who have delivered them to us, were wiser and holier men than thou. As a son of the church, therefore, transgress not these bounds : meditate upon the books of the Old Testament, which, as has been already said, are two-and-twenty ; and if you are desirous to learn, fix them in your memory, as I enumerate them, one by one.” The list of these books Cyril subjoins ; it is precisely the same as the Jewish canon which we receive.*

The council of Laodicea, which met in the year 363, prohibited the public reading of any books as sacred or inspired, except the canonical. In their 59th canon, it is declared, “ that private psalms ought not to be read (or said) in the church, nor any books

* “—although both *he* (Cyril) at *Jerusalem*, and *Athanasius* at *Alexandria*, together with *other churches*, had not the use of the *Hebrew Bible* among them, but kept themselves only to the *Greek translation* of the LXX., whereunto were afterwards commonly added those *ecclesiastical books* which the *Hellenist Jews* first introduced, and received into their churches, that so all the most eminent books of religion written in the Greek tongue before *Christ's* time might be put together and contained in *one volume* ; yet nevertheless they were always careful to preserve the honour of the *Hebrew canon*, which consisted of XXII. books only, *divinely inspired* ; and accurately to distinguish them from the *rest*, which had but *ecclesiastical authority* ;”—Cosin, p. 54.

not canonical, but only the canonical books of the Old and New Testament."

"The Hebrews," says Jerom, who was ordained presbyter of Antioch about the year 378, "have two-and-twenty letters, and they have as many books of divine doctrine, for the instruction of mankind." He next gives a list of these books, and then adds, "This prologue I write as a preface to all the books to be translated by me from the Hebrew into Latin, that we may know that all the books that are not of this number, are to be reckoned Apocryphal. Therefore Wisdom, which is commonly called Solomon's, and the book of Jesus the Son of Sirach, and Judith, and Tobit, and the Shepherd, are not in the canon." In his Latin translation, called the Vulgate, Jerom intermingled the Apocryphal and inspired writings, but to prevent mistake, he prefixed to each book a short notice, in which the reader was distinctly informed of its character, and apprized that the Apocryphal writings were not in the canon of Scripture. He says, that to meet the prejudices of the ignorant, he retained these "fables," which, though not in the Hebrew, were widely dispersed; but he adds, that according to his custom, he had marked these Apocryphal intruders with a spit or dagger placed horizontally for the purpose of stabbing them.* In his

* After the third verse of the tenth chapter of Esther, where the Apocryphal addition to that book commences, Jerom has inserted the following notice; it is the ancient Vulgate to which he refers, which was the most common version of his time:—"Quæ habentur in Hebræo, plena fide expressi. Hæc

letter to Læta, written about the year 398, giving her instructions concerning her daughter Paula, he advises that she should read the Scriptures, and in this order : first the Psalms, next the Proverbs, the Acts, and the Epistles of the Apostles. Afterwards she may read the Prophets, the Pentateuch, the Kings and Chronicles, but *no* Apocryphal books ; or, if she does, she should first, by way of caution, be informed of their true character. Jerom speaks of the fables of Bel and the Dragon, and says that the Apocryphal books do not belong to those whose names they bear, and that they contain several forgeries. In all his works, he explicitly maintains the distinction between canonical and Apocryphal books. “ The latter,” he says, “ the church does not receive among canonical Scriptures ; they may be read for edification of the people, but are not to be esteemed of authority for proving any doctrine of religion.” His canon of the Old Testament was precisely that of the Jews ; and though he and other ancient Christian writers sometimes quote the Apocryphal books, by way of illustration, as they also do Heathen writings, yet they had a supreme regard for the Jewish canon, consisting of those books which were received by the Jewish people as sacred and divine.

Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia, in the island of

autem, quæ sequuntur, scripta reperi in editione vulgata, quæ Græcorum lingua et literis continentur : et interim post finem libri hoc capitulum ferebatur : quod juxta consuetudinem nostram obelo, id est veru, prænotavimus.”

Cyprus, who wrote in the year 392, has thrice enumerated the books of the Old Testament as held by the Jews. Of the Apocryphal books he makes no mention, except of the Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, of which, after referring to the canonical books, he says, "They likewise are useful, but not brought into the same number with the foregoing, and, therefore, are not placed in the ark of the covenant."

Rufinus, presbyter of Aquileia, who wrote about the year 397, after giving distinct catalogues of the sacred Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New, adds as follows: "However, it ought to be observed, that there are also other books that are not canonical, but have been called by our forefathers ecclesiastical, as the Wisdom of Solomon, and another which is called the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach; and among the Latins, is called by the general name of Ecclesiasticus; by which title is denoted not the author of the books, but the quality of the writing. In the same rank is the book of Tobit, and Judith, and the books of the Maccabees. In the New Testament is the book of the Shepherd, or of Hermas, which is called the Two Ways, or the Judgment of Peter. All which they would have to be read in the churches, but not to be alleged by way of authority for proving articles of faith. Other Scriptures they called Apocryphal, which they would not have to be read in the churches." Thus it appears, that all the early Christian writers, while they were unanimous in acknowledging the Jewish Scriptures, rejected, with

one accord, the Apocryphal books as uncanonical, or destitute of all claim to inspiration.

The first catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, in which Apocryphal books were added to the Jewish canon, although some refer it to a later date, is that of the third, sometimes called the sixth council of Carthage, which assembled in the year 397, when the books of the Maccabees were reckoned in the number of canonical books. But the word canonical appears to have been used by them loosely, as comprehending not only the Jewish Scriptures, which were admitted as the rule of faith, but those Apocryphal books also, which they esteemed to be useful. It is said, too, that Innocent, Bishop of Rome, in the year 402, confirmed this catalogue ; but this is doubtful. Other Fathers and councils, in the succeeding centuries, speak occasionally of these books as canonical, meaning, however, as appears, in the secondary sense, and generally with express declarations of their inferiority to the Jewish canon, when that question was agitated. But at length the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, in order to check the progress of the Reformation, pronounced the Apocryphal books (except the prayer of Manasseh, and the third and fourth books of Esdras) to be strictly canonical. From that period they have usurped the name of inspired Scriptures, and have been intermingled with the canonical books in the Bibles of Roman Catholics. Thus, in direct opposition to the command of God, an addition was made to the sacred canon, in the very worst form, of many entire books, and these not corresponding with the inspired writings, but in nume-

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rous instances, and most important particulars, directly contradicting them.*

We have thus observed the manner in which the Apocryphal books came to be connected with the canonical Scriptures. They were not admitted into the canon without much opposition. The most distinguished Christian writers often protested against them, and although those who patronized them maintained that they never meant to dignify these writings

* The following list of books, which is annexed to the decree of the Council of Trent, will show how completely the Apocryphal books are intermingled in Roman Catholic Bibles. The books of the New Testament are the same as in the Protestant canon.

5 of Moses, i.e.	Rest of Esther	12 Prophets the less,
Genesis	Job	i.e.
Exodus	David's Psalms, 150	Hosea
Leviticus	Proverbs	Joel
Numbers	Ecclesiastes	Amos
Deuteronomy	Song of Songs	Obadiah
Joshua	Wisdom	Jonah
Judges	Ecclesiasticus	Micah
Ruth	Isaiah	Nahum
Kings, 4	Jeremiah	Habakkuk
Chronicles, 2	Baruch	Zephaniah
Ezra, 1 and 2	Ezekiel	Haggai
Nehemiah	Daniel	Zechariah
Tobias	Song of three Children	Malachi
Judith	Susanna	Maccabees, 2, I. & II.
Esther	Bel and the Dragon	

Four books, it will be observed, are incorporated in the body of the inspired texts of Esther and Daniel.

with any authority as rules of faith, yet a presentiment, or foresight, of the abuse that might be made of them, induced many in the churches, and even whole churches, to resist their introduction. The Christian assemblies of the East were their principal opponents, and more strictly observed the directions of the Apostle John, who had passed a great part of his life among them. This appears evidently from the conduct and decisions of the Council of Laodicea above quoted, which was held in the fourth century, and which prohibited the reading of any but the canonical books in the churches.

The introduction of the Apocryphal books probably originated in their being written, as is supposed, by Jews, who constantly refer to the authenticated history of their nation, and to the law delivered to their fathers. Although totally devoid of both external and internal evidence of their being from God, yet they came, as we have seen, to be considered as related to the Scriptures, not, indeed, as possessing divine authority, but as profitable for instruction; and in this light they continued to be viewed till the Reformation, which was produced by an open appeal to the Word of God. In vain did the Man of Sin, at that era, protest against tampering with the long-established authority of the church—in vain did he endeavour to prevent the translation and circulation of the Scriptures; the palpable abuses in the Popish system convinced multitudes that it could not be of God, and the desire of examining the Scriptures became irresistible. Amidst all this enquiry, however, the ignorance of Europe was so great, that the Council of

Trent, above referred to, ventured to decree that the Apocryphal books were equal in point of authority, and were henceforth to be viewed as an integral part of the Word of God, and to pronounce its anathema on all who should reject them.

It was then that the design of Satan, in bringing about the unhallowed connexion between the Holy Scriptures and the Apocryphal writings, was brought to light. He had patiently waited his opportunity, and, satisfied with having the books of lying prophets placed in juxta-position with the word of God, had not prosecuted the advantage which he had obtained; but he well knew that, in the course of events, this undefined association of truth and error—of sacred and profane—would increase to more ungodliness; and when the throne of Antichrist seemed tottering to its foundation, he successfully propped it up by the adulteration of the word of God, for which the unfaithfulness of Christians for a thousand years had paved the way. While the reformers strenuously denied the authority of the Apocrypha, and loudly protested against the blasphemous decree by which it was sanctioned as divine, they yielded to the suggestions of a sinful expediency, and allowed it to retain that affinity to the Scriptures which it had long possessed, by being translated, bound up, and circulated along with them. And who can tell how far this has tended to produce that denial of the full inspiration of the Scriptures, which is so lamentably common among Protestants? Be this as it may, to the present hour the book of God is very generally profaned by this unhallowed connexion, more or less

defined or acknowledged. But God now appears to have arisen to plead the cause of his own word. The question in regard to the Apocrypha has, in the course of his adorable providence, begun to be agitated, and it will issue in the purification of the fountain from which those waters flow, that are destined to diffuse life and felicity over the world. Ezek. xlvii. 8, 9. The means by which the attention of Christians has been directed to this all-important subject are very remarkable, and we are forcibly reminded, that in the good providence of God, the most important effects frequently proceed from causes which at first appear to have a directly opposite tendency, and that the friends of truth have often reason to rejoice in the issue of events which at first occasioned the greatest alarm. We are thus taught to adore Him who makes the wrath of man to praise him, and causes human folly and wickedness to redound to the praise of his own glory.

On the subject of adding the Apocryphal writings to the Holy Scriptures, Bishop Hall expresses himself in the following terms: "The Scripture complains justly of three main wrongs offered to it. The first, of addition to the canon. Who can endure a piece of new cloth to be patched unto an old garment? or, what can follow hence, but that the rent should be worse? Who can abide, that, against the faithful information of the Hebrews; against the clear testimonies of Melito, Cyril, Athanasius, Origen, Hilary, Jerom, Rufinus, Nazianzen; against their own doctors, both of the middle and latest age; six whole books should, by their fatherhoods of Trent,

be, under pain of a curse, imperiously obtruded upon God and his church? Whereof yet, some purpose to their readers no better than magical jugglings; others bloody self-murders; others, lying fables; and others, Heathenish rites; not without a public applause in the relation *We know full well how great impiety it is, to fasten upon the God of Heaven the weak conceptions of a human wit*: neither can we be any whit moved with the idle crack of the Tridentine curse, while we hear God thundering in our ears, ‘If any man add unto these words, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book;’ (Apocal. xxii. 18.) Neither know I, whether it be more *wickedly audacious to fasten on God those things which he never wrote*; or to weaken the authority, and deny the sufficiency, of what he hath written.”—HALL’S *No Peace with Rome, &c.*

While there are those who have dared to add certain Apocryphal books to the Jewish canon, which form no part of it, but are the production of lying prophets, and therefore under the curse pronounced upon such by God, there are others who have contended that certain books included in that canon do not constitute a part of divine revelation. This has been particularly the case respecting the book of Esther and the Song of Solomon, which, it has been alleged, are not quoted in the New Testament. But though this may be true as to particular passages, yet the books themselves are quoted each time that either the Lord Jesus Christ or his Apostles refer to what “is written,” or to “the Scriptures,”^x of which they

Is not this a begging of the question?

form a part. Exceptions have been made to these books from their contents, and on this ground their claim to be canonical has been doubted. Such a sentiment is the effect of inconsiderate rashness and presumption.^x The arrogant wisdom of man may now pretend to quarrel with the Book of Esther for not containing the name of God, and to find impurity in the Song of Solomon, or imperfection in other books of Holy Writ. But the authority of Jesus Christ has given a sanction to every book in the Jewish canon, and blasphemy is written on the forehead of that theory that alleges imperfection, error, or sin, in any book in that sacred collection. It is not necessary to urge, that the genuineness and authenticity of the two books referred to were not only not doubted, but that they were received by the Jews with peculiar veneration, which is a well-known fact. The incontrovertible proof respecting their authenticity and inspiration is, that *they form a part of those Scriptures which were committed to the Jewish church, and sanctioned by the Lord and his Apostles.* On these incontrovertible grounds, all the books of the Old Testament Scriptures are most surely believed by the great body of Christians to be the oracles of God; and could it be shown that any one of them is not worthy of being received as a part of the sacred canon, this would invalidate the claim of all the rest. That man, therefore, who rejects a single one of these books as not being canonical, in other words, equally the dictates of inspiration as the rest, proves that he does not rely on the true and secure foundation which

That is, if Canonicality and Plenary Inspiration be the same thing.

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God has laid for entire confidence in that portion of the faithful record of his word. He does it in defiance of all the foregoing evidence; and to deny the whole volume of inspiration would not require the adoption of any other principle than that on which he is proceeding.

NEW TESTAMENT.

FROM the time when the Old Testament was completed by Malachi, the last of the prophets, till the publication of the New Testament, about 460 years elapsed. During the life of Jesus Christ, and for some time after his ascension, nothing on the subject of his mission was committed to writing. The period of his remaining upon earth, may be regarded as an intermediate state between the Old and New Dispensations. His personal ministry was confined to the land of Judea; and, by means of his miracles and discourses, together with those of his disciples, the attention of men, in that country, was sufficiently directed to his doctrine. They were also in possession of the Old Testament Scriptures, which, at that season, it was of the greatest importance they should consult, in order to compare the ancient predictions with what was then taking place. Immediately after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, his disciples, in the most public manner, and in the place where he had been crucified, proclaimed that event, and the whole of the doctrine which he had commanded them to preach. In this service they continued personally to labour for a considerable time, first among their coun-

trymen the Jews, and then among the other nations. During the period between the resurrection and the publication of the New Testament, the churches possessed miraculous gifts, and the prophets were enabled to explain the predictions of the Old Testament, and to show their fulfilment.

After their doctrine had every where attracted attention, and, in spite of the most violent opposition, had forced its way through the civilized world; and when churches or societies of Christians were collected, not only in Judea, but in the most celebrated cities of Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor, the Scriptures of the New Testament were written by the Apostles, and other inspired men, and intrusted to the keeping of these churches.

The whole of the New Testament was not written at once, but in different parts, and on various occasions. Six of the Apostles, and two inspired disciples who accompanied them in their journeys, were employed in this work. The histories which it contains of the life of Christ, known by the name of the Gospels, were composed by four of his contemporaries, two of whom had been constant attendants on his public ministry. The first of these was published within a few years* after his death, in that very country where he had lived, and among the people who had seen him and observed his conduct. The his-

* "Some have thought that it was written no more than eight years after our Lord's ascension; others have reckoned it no fewer than fifteen."—*Campbell's Preface to Matthew's Gospel.*

tory called the "Acts of the Apostles," which contains an account of their proceedings, and of the progress of the Gospel, from Jerusalem, among the gentile nations, was published about the year 64, being 30 years after our Lord's crucifixion, by one who, although not an Apostle, declares that he had "perfect understanding of all things, from the very first," and who had written one of the Gospels. This book, commencing with a detail of proceedings, from the resurrection of Jesus Christ, carries down the evangelical history till the arrival of Paul as a prisoner at Rome. The Epistles, addressed to churches in particular places, to believers scattered up and down in different countries, or to individuals, in all twenty-one in number, were separately written, by five of the Apostles, from seventeen to twenty, thirty, and thirty-five years after the death of Christ. Four of these writers had accompanied the Lord Jesus during his life, and had been "eye-witnesses of his majesty." The fifth was the Apostle Paul, who, as he expresses it, was "one born out of due time," but who had likewise seen Jesus Christ, and had been empowered by him to work miracles, which were "the signs of an apostle." One of these five also wrote the book of Revelation, about the year 96, addressed to seven churches in Asia, containing epistles to these churches from Jesus Christ himself, with various instructions for the immediate use of all Christians, together with a prophetical view of the kingdom of God till the end of time. These several pieces, which compose the Scriptures of the New Testament, were received by the churches with the highest veneration; and, as the

*Epistles from
17 to 35 years
after the Lord
died.*

*Revelation
63 years after*

instructions they contain, though partially addressed, were equally intended for all, they were immediately copied, and handed about from one church to another, till each was in possession of the whole. The volume of the New Testament was thus completed before the death of the last of the Apostles, most of whom had sealed their testimony with their blood.

From the manner in which these Scriptures were at first circulated, some of their parts were necessarily longer of reaching certain places than others. These, of course, could not be so soon received into the canon as the rest. Owing to this circumstance, and to that of a few of the books being addressed to individual believers, or to their not having the name of their writers affixed, or the designation of Apostle added, a doubt for a time existed among some respecting the genuineness of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the 2d Epistle of Peter, the 2d and 3d Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Book of Revelation. These, however, though not universally, were generally acknowledged ; while all the other books of the New Testament were without dispute received from the beginning. This discrimination proves the scrupulous care of the first churches on this highly important subject.

At length these books, which had not at first been admitted, were, like the rest, universally received, not by the votes of a council, as is sometimes asserted, but after deliberate and free enquiry by many separate churches, under the superintending providence of God, in different parts of the world. It is at the same time a certain fact, that no other books besides those

which at present compose the volume of the New Testament, were admitted by the churches. Several Apocryphal writings were published under the name of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, which are mentioned by the writers of the first four centuries, most of which have perished, though some are still extant. Few or none of them were composed before the second century, and several of them were forged so late as the third century. But they were not acknowledged as authentic by the first Christians, and were rejected, by those who have noticed them, as spurious and heretical.* Histories, too, as might have been expected, were written of the life of Christ, and one forgery was attempted, of a letter said to be written by Jesus himself to Abgarus, King of Edessa; but of the first, none were received as of any authority, and the last was universally rejected. "Besides our Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles," says Paley, "no Christian history claiming to be written by an apostle, or apostolical man, is quoted within 300 years after the birth of Christ, by any writer now extant or

* "These forged writings," says Lardner, "do not oppose, but confirm, the account given us in the canonical Scriptures. They all take for granted the dignity of our Lord's person, and his power of working miracles; they acknowledge the certainty of there having been such persons as Matthew and the other evangelists, and Peter and the other Apostles. They authenticate the general and leading facts contained in the New Testament. They presuppose that the Apostles received from Christ a commission to propagate his religion, and a supernatural power to enforce its authority. And thus they indirectly establish the truth and divine original of the Gospel."

known, or if quoted, is quoted with marks of censure and rejection."

This agreement of Christians respecting the Scriptures, when we consider their many differences in other respects, is the more remarkable, since it took place without any public authority being interposed. "We have no knowledge," says the above author, "of any interference of authority in the question before the council of Laodicea, in the year 363. Probably the decree of this council rather declared than regulated the public judgment, or, more properly speaking, the judgment of some neighbouring churches—the council itself consisting of no more than thirty or forty bishops of Lydia and the adjoining countries. Nor does its authority seem to have extended farther." But the fact, that no public authority was interposed, does not require to be supported by the above reasoning. The churches at the beginning, being widely separated from each other, necessarily judged for themselves in this matter, and the decree of the council was founded on the coincidence of their judgment.

In delivering this part of his written revelation, God proceeded as he had done in the publication of the Old Testament Scriptures. For a considerable time, his will was declared to mankind through the medium of oral tradition. At length he saw meet, in his wisdom, to give it a more permanent form. But this did not take place, till a nation, separated from all others, was provided for its reception. In the same manner, when Jesus Christ set up his kingdom in the world, of which the nation of Israel was a type, he

first made known his will by means of verbal communication, through his servants whom he commissioned and sent out for that purpose ; and when, through their means, he had prepared his subjects and collected them into churches, to be the depositaries of his word, he caused it to be delivered to them in writing. His kingdom was not to consist of any particular nation, like that of Israel, but of all those individuals, in every part of the world, who should believe in his name. It was to be ruled, not by means of human authority, or compulsion of any kind, but solely by his authority. These sacred writings were thus intrusted to a people prepared for their reception—a nation among the nations, but singularly distinct from all the rest, who guarded and preserved them with the same inviolable attachment as the Old Testament Scriptures had experienced from the Jews.

Respecting the lateness of the time when the Scriptures of the New Testament were written, no objection can be offered, since they were published before that generation passed which had witnessed the transactions they record. The dates of these writings fall within the period of the lives of many who were in full manhood when the Lord Jesus Christ was upon earth ; and the facts detailed in the histories, and referred to in the Epistles, being of the most public nature, were still open to full investigation. It must also be recollected, that the Apostles and disciples, during the whole intermediate period, were publicly proclaiming to the world the same things which were afterwards recorded in their writings.

Had these Scriptures been published before so-

cieties of Christians were in existence, to whose care could they have been intrusted? What security would there have been for their preservation, or that they would not have been corrupted? In the way which was adopted, they were committed to faithful men, who, viewing them as the charter of their own salvation, and the doctrine which they contained as the appointed means of rescuing their fellow creatures from misery and guilt, watched over their preservation with the most zealous and assiduous care.

But unless the whole manner of communicating the revelation of God, in these Scriptures, had been altered, it is not possible, that, excepting the accounts of the life of Jesus Christ, they could have been earlier committed to writing. The history of the Acts of the Apostles, being carried down to about the year 63 of the Christian era, could not, it is evident, have been published sooner. The Epistles are not addressed to men of the world, or to the whole inhabitants of particular countries, but exclusively to believers. The truth conveyed in them is not delivered in an abstract form, but in the way of immediate application to existing cases and circumstances. This practical method of communicating the doctrine, and of recording the laws of the kingdom of Christ, which commends itself to every reflecting mind, could not, it is manifest, have been adopted till societies of Christians were in existence, and till they had existed for some considerable time. In this way, too, we have an undeniable proof of the success of the Apostles in the rapid progress of the Gospel. We are made acquainted, as we could not otherwise have been, with

their zeal, resolution, self-denial, disinterestedness, patience, and meekness, and have the most convincing evidence of the extraordinary gifts they possessed. We are also put in possession of indubitable evidence of the miraculous gifts conferred on the first Christians, as well as of their sincerity, courage, and patience.

Thus were the Scriptures, as we now possess them, delivered to the first churches. By the concurrent testimony of all antiquity, both of friends and foes, they were received by Christians of different sects, and were constantly appealed to on all hands, in the controversies that arose among them. Commentaries upon them were written at a very early period, and translations made into different languages. Formal catalogues of them were published, and they were attacked by the adversaries of Christianity, who not only did not question, but expressly admitted, the facts they contained, and that they were the genuine productions of the persons whose names they bore.

In this manner the Scriptures were also secured from the danger of being in any respect altered or vitiated. "The books of Scripture," says Augustine, "could not have been corrupted. If such an attempt had been made by any one, his design would have been prevented and defeated. His alterations would have been immediately detected by many and more ancient copies. The difficulty of succeeding in such an attempt is apparent hence, that the Scriptures were early translated into divers languages, and copies of them were numerous. The alterations which any one attempted to make would have been

soon perceived ; just even as now, in fact, lesser faults in some copies are amended by comparing ancient copies or those of the original. . . . If any one," continues Augustine, "should charge you with having interpolated some texts alleged by you as favourable to your cause, what would you say ? Would you not immediately answer that it is impossible for you to do such a thing in books read by all Christians ? And that if any such attempt had been made by you, it would have been presently discerned and defeated by comparing the ancient copies ? Well, then, for the same reason that the Scriptures cannot be corrupted by you, neither could they be corrupted by any other people."

Accordingly, the uniformity of the manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures that are extant, which are incomparably more numerous than those of any ancient author, and which are dispersed through so many countries, and in so great a variety of languages, is truly astonishing. It demonstrates both the veneration in which the Scriptures have always been held, and the singular care that has been taken in transcribing them. The number of various readings, that by the most minute and laborious investigation and collations of manuscripts have been discovered in them, said to amount to one hundred and fifty thousand, though at first sight they may seem calculated to diminish confidence in the sacred text, yet in no degree whatever do they affect its credit and integrity. They consist almost wholly in palpable errors in transcription, grammatical and verbal differences, such as the insertion or omission of a let-

ter or article, the substitution of a word for its equivalent, the transposition of a word or two in a sentence. Taken altogether, they neither change nor affect a single doctrine or duty announced or enjoined in the Word of God.* When, therefore, we consider the great antiquity of the sacred books, the almost infinite number of copies, of versions, of editions, which have been made of them in all languages,—in languages which have not any analogy one with another, among nations differing so much in their customs and their religious opinions,—When we consider these things, it is truly astonishing, and can only be ascribed to the watchful providence of God over his own word, that amongst the various readings, nothing truly essential can be discerned, which relates to either precept or doctrine, or which breaks that connexion—that unity—which subsists in all the various parts of divine revelation, and which demonstrates the whole to be the work of one and the same Spirit.

In proof that the Scriptures were published and delivered to the churches in the age to which their dates refer, we have the attestation of a connected chain of Christian writers, from that period to the present day. No fewer than six of these authors, part of whose works are still extant, were contemporaries of the Apostles.

* Dr Kennicott examined and collated 600 Hebrew manuscripts, and so trifling were the variations he discovered, that it has been objected, though very unjustly, that he had effected nothing by all his labours.

BARNABAS was the companion of the Apostle Paul. He is the author of an Epistle, which was well known among the early Christians. It is still extant, and refers to the Apostolic writings.

CLEMENT was the third bishop of the church in Rome, and is mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians. He has left a long Epistle, which is extant, though not entire, written in name of the church at Rome to the church at Corinth, in which the latter is admonished to adhere to the commands of Christ. Irenæus says that it was written by Clement, "who had seen the blessed Apostles, and conversed with them; who had the preaching of the Apostles still sounding in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes. Nor he alone, for there were then still many alive, who had been taught by the Apostles. In the time therefore of this Clement, when there was no small dissension among the brethren at Corinth, the church at Rome sent a most excellent letter to the Corinthians, persuading them to peace among themselves." About 80 or 90 years after this letter was written, Dionysius, the Bishop at Corinth, declares, that "it had been wont to be read in that church from ancient times." It contains several quotations from the New Testament Scriptures, and allusions to them.

HERMAS also, contemporary with the Apostles, has left a book that still remains, called, "The Shepherd of Hermas," in which he quotes and enforces the doctrine of Scripture.

IGNATIUS was bishop of the church at Antioch, about thirty-seven years after Christ's ascension. He

suffered martyrdom at Rome under the Emperor Trajan. Ignatius has left several Epistles that are still extant, which give testimony to Jesus Christ and his doctrine. He declares, that he "fled to the Gospels as the flesh of Jesus, and to the Apostles as the elders of the church."

What a striking difference does Ignatius here make between the Gospels, and the Epistles. Are we to believe that this distinction is made without any ground for it in the nature of the writings themselves?

POLYCARP had been taught by the Apostles, and had conversed with many who had seen Christ. He was appointed by the Apostles, Bishop of the church at Smyrna. One epistle of his still remains, which evinces the respect that he and other Christians bore for the Scriptures. Irenæus, who, in his youth, had been a disciple of Polycarp, says, concerning him, in a letter to Florinus,—“I saw you when I was very young, in the Lower Asia with Polycarp. For I better remember the affairs of that time, than those which have lately happened; the things which we learn in our childhood growing up with the soul, and uniting themselves to it. Insomuch, that I can tell the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and coming in, and the manner of his life, and the form of his person, and the discourses he made to the people; and how he related his conversation with John, and others who had seen the Lord; and how he related their sayings, and what he had heard from them concerning the Lord; both concerning his miracles and his doctrine, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life: all which Polycarp related agreeable to the Scriptures. These things I then, through the mercy of God toward me, diligently heard and attended to, recording them not on paper, but upon my heart.

And through the grace of God I continually renew the remembrance of them." Polycarp was condemned to the flames at Smyrna, the proconsul being present, and all the people in the amphitheatre demanding his death. Thus, like Ignatius, he confirmed his testimony to the Scriptures with his blood.

PAPIAS was a hearer of the Apostle John, and a companion of Polycarp. He was the author of five books, which are now lost, but which, according to quotations from them that remain, bore testimony to the Scriptures. He expressly ascribes their respective Gospels to Matthew and Mark.

The above six writers had all lived and conversed with some of the Apostles. Those parts which remain of the writings of the first five, who are called the Apostolical Fathers, are valuable by their antiquity; and all of them contain some important testimony to the Scriptures.

About twenty years after these writers follows JUSTIN MARTYR. He was born about the year 89, and suffered martyrdom about the year 163. Originally he had been a Heathen philosopher; and, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, he relates the circumstances of his conversion to Christianity. From his works might be extracted almost a complete life of Christ; and he uniformly represents the Scriptures as containing the authentic account of his doctrine. The Gospels, he says, were read and expounded every Sunday in the solemn assemblies of the Christians. He particularly mentions the Acts of the Apostles, along with the books of the Old Testament, which were also regularly read as in the Jewish synagogues;

ere again appears to have been distinction made between the Gospels and the Epistles

and he appeals to the Scriptures as writings open to all the world, and read by Jews and Gentiles. He presented two apologies for the Christian religion; the first to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, in the year 140; the second to Marcus Antoninus, the philosopher, in the year 162. Both these apologies are still extant; the first entire, of the second the beginning is wanting.

DIONYSIUS, TATIAN, and HEGESIPPUS, wrote about thirty years after Justin Martyr, and give their testimony to the Scriptures. Hegesippus relates, that, travelling from Palestine to Rome, he visited in his journey many bishops; and that "in every succession, and in every city, the same doctrine is taught which the law and the prophets and the Lord teacheth."

About the year 177, the churches of Lyons and Vienne in France sent a relation of the persecutions they suffered to the churches in Asia and Phrygia. POTHINUS, bishop of the church at Lyons, was then 90 years old; and in his early life was contemporary with the Apostle John. This letter, which is preserved entire, makes exact references to the Scriptures.

IRENÆUS succeeded Pothinus as bishop at Lyons. In his youth, as has been already noticed, he had been a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. Thus he was only one step removed from the Apostles. Irenæus gives a most ample testimony, both to the genuineness and the authenticity of the Scriptures. "We have not received," says he, "the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those by whom the

Gospel has been brought to us ; which Gospel they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be for time to come the foundation and pillar of our faith.—For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they (the Apostles) were endued from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace, having, all of them, and every one alike, the Gospel of God. Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, and founding a church there. And after their exit, (death or departure,) Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter ; and Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him (Paul.) Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, he likewise published a Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia. And all these have delivered to us, that there is one God, the maker of the heaven and the earth, declared by the law and the prophets, and one Christ, the Son of God. And he who does not assent to them, despiseth indeed those who knew the mind of the Lord : but he despiseth also Christ himself the Lord, and he despiseth likewise the Father, and is self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as all heretics do.”—
 “The tradition of the Apostles hath spread itself over the whole universe ; and all they who search after the

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sources of truth, will find this tradition to be held sacred in every church. We might enumerate all those who have been appointed bishops to those churches by the Apostles, and all their successors up to our days. It is by this uninterrupted succession that we have received the tradition which actually exists in the church, and also the doctrine of truth as it is preached by the Apostles."

After giving some reasons why he supposed the number of the Gospels was precisely four, Irenæus says, "Whence it is manifest that the Word, the Former of all things, who sits upon the cherubim, and upholds all things, having appeared to men, has given to us a Gospel of a fourfold character, but joined in one spirit.—The Gospel according to John discloses his primary and glorious generation from the Father: 'In the beginning was the Word.'—But the Gospel according to Luke, being of a priestly character, begins with Zacharias the priest offering incense to God.—Matthew relates his generation, which is according to men: 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.'—Mark begins from the prophetic spirit which came down from above to men, saying, 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet.'"

The above passage distinctly ascertains, that the four Gospels, as we have them, and no more, were equally received and acknowledged by the first churches.

Irenæus farther says, "The Gospel according to Matthew was written to the Jews, for they earnest-

ly desired a Messiah of the seed of David ; and Matthew, having also the same desire to a yet greater degree, strove by all means to give them full satisfaction that Christ was of the seed of David, wherefore he began with his genealogy.”—“ Wherefore also Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter, makes this the beginning of his evangelic writing, ‘ The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.’ And in the end of the Gospel, Mark says, ‘ So then, the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.’ ”—“ But if any one rejects Luke, as if he did not know the truth, he will be convicted of throwing away the Gospel, of which he professeth to be a disciple. For there are many, and those very necessary, parts of the Gospel, which we know by his means.” He then refers to several particulars, which are known only from Luke.

The Acts of the Apostles is a book much quoted by Irenæus, as written by Luke, the companion of the Apostles. There are few things recorded in that book which have not been mentioned by him. “ And that Luke,” says he, “ was inseparable from Paul, and his fellow-worker in the Gospel, he himself shows, not boasting of it indeed, but obliged to it for the sake of truth.”

Irenæus quotes largely from the Epistles of Paul, and remarks, that this Apostle “ frequently uses hyperbata,” (or transpositions of words from their natural order,) “ because of the rapidity of his words, and because of the mighty force of ‘ the Spirit in him.’ ” The book of Revelation Irenæus often quotes, and

says, "It was seen no long time ago, but almost in our own age, at the end of the reign of Domitian." He mentions the code of the Old Testament and of the New, and calls the one, as well as the other, the Oracles of God.

Speaking of the Scriptures in general, he says, "well knowing that the Scriptures are perfect, as being dictated by the word of God and his Spirit."—"A heavy punishment awaits those who add to or take from the Scriptures."—"But we, following the one and the only true God as our teacher, and having his words as a rule of truth, do all always speak the same things concerning the same things."

ATHENAGORAS, MILTIADES, THEOPHILUS, and PANTÆNUS, who lived at the same time with Irenæus, all bear testimony to the Scriptures. Some of their works remain, and others are lost.

CLEMENT, of Alexandria, followed Irenæus at the distance of sixteen years. He was a man of great learning, and presided in the Catechetical School at Alexandria. Clement travelled into different countries in search of information. "The law and the Prophets, together with the Gospels," he says, "conduct to one and the same knowledge in the name of Christ."—"One God and Almighty Lord is taught by the law and the prophets, and the blessed Gospels."

He has given a distinct account of the order in which the four Gospels were written. The Gospels which contain the genealogies were, he says, written first, Mark's next, and John's the last. He repeatedly quotes the four Gospels by the names of their authors, and expressly ascribes the Acts of the Apostles to

Again the Gospels are made the chief subject

Luke. His quotations from the Scriptures of the New Testament are numerous, and he calls them "the Scriptures of the Lord," and the "true evangelical canon."

Next to Clement, and in the same age, comes TERTULLIAN, who was born at Carthage about the year 160. He was a man of extensive learning, and the most considerable of all the Latin writers on Christianity. He wrote a very valuable apology for the Christians, about the year 198, addressed to the governors of provinces, which is still extant. He gives the most ample attestation to the Scriptures, quoting them so frequently, that, as Lardner observes, there are more and longer quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Christian author, than there are of all the works of Cicero in writers of all characters for several ages. After enumerating many churches which had been gathered by Paul and the other Apostles, he declares, that not those churches only which were called Apostolical, but all who have fellowship with them in the same faith, received the four Gospels,⁺ and that these had been in the possession of the churches from the beginning. He also declares, that the original manuscripts of the Apostles, at least some of them, were preserved till the age in which he lived, and were then to be seen.

*Here again,
the Gospels.*

"In the first place," says Tertullian, "we lay this down for a certain truth, that the Evangelic Scriptures have for their authors the Apostles, to whom the work of publishing the Gospel was committed by the Lord himself; and also Apostolical men.—Among the Apostles, John and Matthew teach us the faith;

among Apostolical men, Luke and Mark refresh it, going upon the same principles as concerning the one God the Creator, and his Christ born of a virgin, the accomplishment of the law and the prophets.—If it be certain that that is most genuine which is most ancient, that most ancient which is from the beginning, and that from the beginning which is from the Apostles ; in like manner, it will be also certain that that has been delivered from the Apostles which is held sacred in the churches of the Apostles. Let us then see what milk the Corinthians received from Paul, to what rule the Galatians were reduced, what the Philippians read, what the Thessalonians, the Ephesians, and also the Romans recite, who are near to us ; with whom both Peter and Paul left the Gospel sealed with their blood. We have also churches which are the disciples of John ; for, though Marcion rejects his Revelation, the succession of Bishops, traced up to the beginning, will show it to have John for its author. We know also the original of other churches, (that is, that they are Apostolical.) I say, then, that with them, but not with them only that are Apostolical, but with all who have fellowship with them in the same faith, is that Gospel of Luke received, which we so zealously maintain.” That is the genuine entire Gospel of Luke, not that which had been curtailed and altered by Marcion. “The same authority of the Apostolical churches will support the other Gospels, which we have from them, and according to them, (that is, according to their copies.) I mean John’s and Matthew’s, although that likewise which Mark published may be said to be Peter’s, whose in-

terpreter Mark was, for Luke's digest also is often ascribed to Paul." Tertullian says that Matthew's Gospel began in this manner, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The Acts of the Apostles are often quoted by him under that title: he calls them Luke's Commentary, or History.

"I will," says Tertullian, "by no means say Gods nor Lords, but I will follow the Apostle; so that, if the Father and the Son are to be mentioned together, I will say God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Lord; but when I mention Christ only, I can call him God, as the Apostle does." "*Of whom Christ came, who is,*" says he, "*over all, God blessed for ever.*"

To Tertullian succeeds a multitude of Christian writers. Of the works of these authors, only fragments and quotations remain, in which several testimonies to the Gospels are found. In one of them is an abstract of the whole Gospel history.

After those writers, and at the distance of twenty-five years from Tertullian, comes the celebrated ORIGEN of Alexandria, of whom it is said, that "he did not so much recommend Christianity by what he preached, or by what he wrote, as by the general tenor of his life." He was born about 150 years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the quantity of his writings he exceeded the most laborious of the Greek and Latin writers. He gives full and decisive testimony to the Scriptures. He says, "that the four Gospels alone are received without dispute by the whole church of God under heaven;" and he sub-joins a history of their respective authors. "The first,"

*the Gospels
were received
without dispute*

says Origen, "is written by Matthew, once a publican, afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ. The second is that according to Mark, who wrote it as Peter dictated to him, who therefore calls him his son in his Catholic Epistle. The third is that according to Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, published for the sake of the Gentile converts. Lastly, that according to John." He speaks of the Acts of the Apostles as an uncontested book, and gives the same account concerning Mark's Gospel as having been written under the direction of the Apostle Peter, which is given by Clement. It is reckoned a monument of the humility of Peter, that several very remarkable circumstances in his favour, that are related by the other Evangelists, are not mentioned, or even hinted at, by Mark.†

Origen uniformly quotes the Epistle to the Hebrews as the writing of the Apostle Paul, and the Book of Revelation as the writing of the Apostle John. His quotations of Scripture are so numerous, that Dr Mill says, "if we had all his works remaining, we should have before us almost the whole text of the Bible." He expresses, in the most unqualified terms, his opinion of the authority of the books of the New Testament as inspired writings, and says, that "the sacred books are not writings of men, but have been written and delivered to us from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the will of the Father of all, through Jesus Christ." He urges, with earnestness, the reading of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, as a sacred obligation in the churches of Christ. "Food," says he, "is eaten, physic is taken; though the good effect is not presently perceived, a benefit is expected

† It can only be accounted on the supposition that Peter was at liberty to dictate the circumstances Mark if he had chosen so to do. But this supposition destroys the theory of Plenary Inspiration.

in time, and may be obtained. So it is with the Holy Scriptures; though, at the very time of reading of them, there be no sensible advantage, yet, in the end, they will be thought profitable for strengthening virtuous dispositions, and weakening the habits of vice.—The true food of the rational nature is the word of God.—Let us come daily to the wells of the Scriptures, the waters of the Holy Spirit, and there draw and carry hence a full vessel. The greatest torment of demons is to see men reading the word of God, and labouring to understand the divine law.”

In his *Apology for the Christian Religion*, in answer to Celsus the Epicurean philosopher, Origen, when giving a quotation from Scripture, says that it is written, “not in any private book, or such as are read by a few persons only, but in books read by every body.” In that *Apology*, he has preserved, from the writings of Celsus, most distinct and complete attestations to the Gospel history.

GREGORY, Bishop at Neocesaria, and DIONYSIUS of Alexandria, scholars of Origen, and the well-known CYPRIAN, Bishop at Carthage, come about twenty years after Origen. Their writings abound with copious citations from the Scriptures, to which they give their full and particular attestation. Cyprian says, “The church is watered, like Paradise, by four rivers, that is, four Gospels.”

Within forty years after Cyprian, VICTORINUS, Bishop at Pettaw, in Germany, and a multitude of Christian writers, all testify their profound respect for the Scriptures.

About the year 306, ARNOBIUS and LACTANTIUS

wrote in support of the Christian religion. Lactantius argues in its defence, from the consistency, simplicity, disinterestedness, and sufferings of the writers of the Gospels. Arnobius vindicates the credit of the writers of the Gospels, observing, that they were eye-witnesses of the facts which they relate, and that their ignorance of the arts of composition was rather a confirmation of their testimony, than an objection to it.

EUSEBIUS, Bishop at Cæsarea, born about the year 270, wrote about fifteen years after the above authors. He composed a History of Christianity, from its origin to his own time ; and has handed down many valuable extracts of ancient authors, whose works have perished. In giving his testimony to the Scriptures, he shows himself to be much conversant in the works of Christian authors, and he appears to have collected every thing that had been said, before his own time, respecting the volume of the New Testament.

ATHANASIUS became Bishop at Alexandria about the year 326. He expressly affirms, that every one of the books of the New Testament that we now receive, are inspired Scriptures, which he specifies in their order, and ascribes them to the writers whose names they bear. He represents them as constantly and publicly read in the Christian churches. Athanasius had access to every source of information, and applied himself to ascertain the canon of the Old Testament as well as of the New. It appears, that he sent to the Emperor Constance a copy of the whole Bible, which he described as the whole inspired Scriptures. Speaking of the Scriptures, he says,

“ These are fountains of salvation. In them alone, the doctrine of religion is taught. Let no man add to them, or take any thing from them.”

It is unnecessary to carry down this chain of historical evidence any farther. The Council of Nice was called by Constantine in the year 325 ; and as Christianity had then become the established religion of the Roman empire, its history is afterwards inseparably interwoven with every thing connected with the state of the world.

From the above numerous and early writers, we have most unquestionable attestations to the integrity and authority of the Holy Scriptures. First, we have six writers who were contemporary with the Apostles, and then eleven more who lived in distant parts of the world, regularly succeeding each other during the first hundred years after the Apostles. From that period, the chain of evidence continues unbroken and uninterrupted. “ When Christian advocates,” says Paley, “ merely tell us that we have the same reason for believing the Gospels to be written by the Evangelists whose names they bear, as we have for believing the Commentaries to be Cæsar’s, the *Æneid* Virgil’s, or the Orations Cicero’s, they content themselves with an imperfect representation. They state nothing more than what is true, but they do not state the truth correctly. In the number, variety, and early date of our testimonies, we far exceed all other ancient books. For one which the most celebrated work of the most celebrated Greek or Roman writer can allege, we produce many.”

The force of the above testimony is greatly strength-

ened by the consideration, that it is the concurring evidence of separate, independent, and well-informed writers, who lived in countries remote from one another. Clement lived at *Rome*; Ignatius, at *Antioch*; Polycarp, at *Smyrna*; Justin Martyr, in *Syria*; Irenæus, in *France*; Tertullian, at *Carthage*; Origen, in *Egypt*; Eusebius, at *Cæsarea*; Victorinus, in *Germany*. The dangers which they encountered, and the hardships and persecutions which they suffered, some of them even unto death, on account of their adherence to the Christian faith, give irresistible weight to their testimony.

“No writings,” says Augustine, “ever had a better testimony afforded them than those of the Apostles and Evangelists. Nor does it weaken the credit and authority of books, received by the church of Christ from the beginning, that some other writings have been, without ground, and falsely, ascribed to the Apostles. For the like has happened, for instance, to Hippocrates; but yet his genuine works are distinguished from others which have been published under his name. We know the writings of the Apostles as we know the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Varro, and others, to be theirs, and as we know the writings of divine ecclesiastical authors; for as much as they have the testimony of contemporaries, and of those who have lived in succeeding times. I might, moreover, by way of illustration, produce for examples those now in hand. Suppose some one in time to come should deny those to be the works of Faustus, or those to be mine; how should he be satisfied but by the testimony of those of this time who

knew both, and have transmitted their accounts to others? And shall not, then, the testimony of the churches, and Christian brethren, be valid here; especially when they are so numerous, and so harmonious, and the tradition is with so much ease and certainty traced down from the Apostles to our time—I say, shall any be so foolish and unreasonable as to deny or dispute the credibility of such a testimony to the Scriptures, which would be allowed in behalf of any writings whatever, whether heathen or ecclesiastical?”

In another place Augustine observes, “If you here ask us, how we know these to be the writings of the Apostles; in brief we answer, in the same way that you know the epistles, or any other writings of Mani, to be his: for if any one should be pleased to dispute with you, and offer to deny the epistles ascribed to Mani to be his, what would you do? Would you not laugh at the assurance of the man who denied the genuineness of writings generally allowed? As therefore it is certain those books are Mani’s, and he would be ridiculous who should now dispute it; so certain is it that the Manichees deserve to be laughed at, or rather ought to be pitied, who dispute the truth and genuineness of those writings of the Apostles, which have been handed down as theirs from their time to this through an uninterrupted succession of well-known witnesses.”

Should it occur to any that to prove the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures by the testimony of the Fathers, is to sanction the traditions of the Church of Rome, they ought to consider that

there is a radical distinction between these two cases. Testimony is a first principle, universally acknowledged as authoritative in its own province, as far as it is unexceptionable. The whole business of the world proceeds on this principle, and without it human affairs would run into utter confusion. That historical testimony is a legitimate source of evidence, the general sentiments of mankind admit, in the universal appeal to history for the knowledge of past events. Historical testimony may be false, but this is not peculiar to this class of first principles. We are liable to be deceived on all subjects to which our faculties are directed; but there are means by which historical evidence may be ascertained. Its proof may vary from the lowest degree of probability to the highest degree of certainty. Of many things recorded even in profane history, we can have no more doubt than we can have of truths that contain their own evidence. Now, the stress laid on the testimony of the ancient writers that have been quoted, is warranted by the most cautious laws of historical evidence; and it cannot be rejected, without entirely rejecting history as a legitimate ground of knowledge. That such writers did give such testimony, is as indisputable as any historical fact can be. And the proof of this lies open to every man who has time, opportunity, and ability to examine the subject. If so, there is no reason to reject as insufficient, in proof of the authenticity of the Bible, the same kind of evidence that is allowed to prove any other fact. But the traditions of the Church of Rome are not of this nature. They are not historical at all. They have not been written; they are

nowhere to be found. It is not pretended by their friends that they possess historical evidence. They are recommended altogether on another foundation, —the authority of the church. It is said the church has had them treasured up in secret ; but we can have no higher assurance of their authenticity than what we are willing to rest on the authority of the church. The difference, then, between the two cases, is manifest and essential. And clearer historical proof cannot be exhibited on any subject, than has been adduced for the genuineness and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures.

It has been supposed that if a list of the names and numbers of the books of Scripture had been recorded in any part of the canon, it would have added to our certainty respecting the divine original of the whole. But if there were such a list, it would still remain to be decided whether the books we possess were the very books named, in words and substance, as well as in name. Indeed if the list were written, and the number of lines and words recorded, the case would still be the same. It would not in the smallest degree add to our certainty respecting their divine original ; for how could we be assured of that inspired list, but from the certainty of the book being from God that contained the list ? Such a list could neither ascertain its own accuracy, nor the authenticity of the book which contained it. The authenticity of that list must have been ascertained precisely in the same manner as that of each and all of the books is now ascertained.

If, therefore, the name and number of the inspired

books were contained in any epistle, it would still leave the authority of the books named, on the same foundation of the authority of the epistle in which they were named; and that authority must have been ascertained exactly in the same way by which we now ascertain the authority of each and all of the inspired books. The ultimate foundation, then, of the evidence would be the *same*, as to that particular part which contained the list; and, with respect to the books mentioned in the list, we could not be assured against their mutilation and corruption. It is quite absurd, then, to suppose that a list of the names and numbers of the inspired books would have given us better evidence of their authority. The authority of that part which contained such a list, must be ascertained in the ordinary way; and, as the stream cannot rise higher than the fountain, the authority of all the books, as resting on the testimony of one, would be no stronger than that of the one which supported them. In whatever way that one could prove its divine authority, in the same way we now prove the authority of all.†

The circumstance, then, that there is not a list of the books of inspiration contained in the page of inspiration itself, does not lessen the certainty as to the canon, nor increase the difficulty of ascertaining the truth of it. That if a list of the books of Scripture were given in the Scriptures, it would not fix the question of the canon on a surer foundation, is obvious, too, from the consideration that a forgery might contain such a list, as well as an authentic document, and that the truth of such a list takes it for granted that the book which contains it is canonical. Is the second

+ Good argument
It applies also to
the witnesses
adduced in the
previous pages.
Those of the 2^d
and 3^d genera-
tions &c. add
no authority
to the first. They
are good witness-
es to what the
first taught, but
they add nothing
in point of au-
thority.

epistle of Peter put above the first, as to the certainty of its being canonical, by the assertion, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you." Does such an expression establish its being canonical? Is it not evident, on the contrary, that the epistle's being canonical must be established, before the assertion, "This second epistle I now write unto you," is believed to be inspired? So far from such a list proving that the books which contain it are canonical, it is their being canonical that verifies the list. If the claim of a book of Scripture to be canonical is not ascertained, the list which it contains is not revelation. With respect to the books of the Old Testament, however, such a list is in effect given, and the inspiration of them warranted in the assertion, "All Scripture is given by inspiration." Now, the steps by which we arrive at certainty here, are few and simple. If the book of the New Testament which contains this assertion is canonical, it warrants all the books of the Old Testament which at the time of its publication were received as Scripture. We have only to enquire what books were then contained in the Jewish canon, to be assured in this matter. This is a point of testimony on which no difficulty exists. It must be observed, however, that the confidence placed in the list, or notification, rests entirely upon the authenticity of the book that contains it being previously ascertained. But if a list of the whole of the inspired books is the only thing that could ascertain with sufficient evidence, such as are from God, then no man can have a thorough faith in the Scriptures, for such a list has not been given. And had it been given,

True

it could not have secured against forgery, as has been already noticed, for nothing is easier than for a forger to give such a list. Had the Scriptures been a forgery, they would probably have recommended themselves by a very correct list.

It has been asserted that "the question of the canon is a point of erudition, not of divine revelation." This is to undermine both the certainty and the importance of the sacred canon. The assertion, that the question of the canon is *not a point of revelation*, is false. It is not true either of the Old Testament, or of the New. The integrity of the canon of the Old Testament, is a matter of revelation, as much as any thing contained in the Bible. This is attested, as has been shown, by the whole nation of the Jews, to whom it was committed, and their fidelity to the truth has been avouched by the Lord and his Apostles. Is not this revelation? The integrity of the canon of the New Testament is equally a point of revelation. As God had said to the Jews, "Ye are my witnesses," and as they "received the lively oracles to give unto us," Acts vii. 38; so the Lord Jesus said to the Apostles, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The first churches received the New Testament Scriptures from these witnesses of the Lord, and thus had inspired authority for those books. It was not left to erudition or reasoning to collect, that they were a revelation from God. This the first Christians knew from the testimony of those who wrote them. They could not be more assured that the things taught were from God, than they were that

the writings which contained them were from God. The integrity of the sacred canon is, then, a matter of revelation, conveyed to us by testimony, like every thing contained in the Scriptures.

While it has been denied that the question of the canon is a point of revelation, it has been asserted that it is a point of erudition. But erudition has nothing further to do with the question, than as it may be employed in conveying to us the testimony. Erudition did not produce the revelation of the canon. If the canon had not been a point of revelation, erudition could never have made it so; for erudition can create nothing; it can only investigate and confirm truth, and testify to that which exists, or detect error. We receive the canon of Scripture by revelation, in the same way that the Jews received the law which was given from Mount Sinai. Only one generation of the Jews witnessed the giving of the law; but to all the future generations of that people, it was equally a matter of revelation. The knowledge of this was conveyed to them by testimony. In the same way, Christians, in their successive generations, receive the canon of Scripture as a matter of revelation. The testimony through which this is received, must indeed be translated from a foreign language; but so must the account brought to us of any occurrence the most trivial that takes place in a foreign country. If in this sense the question of the canon be called a point of erudition, the gospel itself must be called a point of erudition; for it, too, must be translated from the original language in which it was announced, as also must every thing which the

Scriptures contain. When a preacher inculcates the belief of the gospel, or of a doctrine of Scripture, or obedience to any duty, would he be warranted in telling his audience that these are questions of erudition, not of divine revelation? Erudition may be allowed its full value, without suspending on it the authority of the Word of God.

The assertion that the question of the canon is a point of erudition, not of divine revelation, is subversive of the whole of revelation. We have no way of knowing that the miracles related in the Scriptures were wrought, and that the doctrines inculcated were taught, but by testimony and the internal evidence of the books themselves. We have the evidence of miracles, as that evidence comes to us by the testimony which vouches the authenticity of the inspired books. As far as the genuineness and authenticity of any book are brought into suspicion, so far is every thing contained in it brought into suspicion. For it should always be remembered, that there is no greater absurdity than to question the claim of a book to a place in the canon, and at the same time to acknowledge its contents to be a revelation from God. There can be no evidence that the doctrines of Scripture are revealed truths, unless we are certain that the books of Scripture are revelation. If the books which compose the canon are not matter of revelation, then we have no revelation. If the truth of the canon be not established to us as matter of revelation, then the books of which it is composed are not so established; and if the books be not so, then not one sentence of

them, nor one doctrine or precept which they contain, comes established to us as a revelation from God. If then the question of the canon be a point of erudition, not of divine revelation, so is every doctrine which the Scriptures contain. For the doctrine cannot be assured revelation, if the book that contains it be not assured revelation. There can be no higher evidence of the doctrine being revelation, than of the book that contains it; and thus were not the canon a matter of divine revelation, the whole Bible would be stripped of divine authority. Any thing, therefore, that goes to unsettle the canon, goes to unsettle every doctrine contained in the canon.

Without a particular revelation to every individual, it does not appear that the authority of the canon could be ascertained to us in any other way than it is at present. The whole of the Scriptures was given at first by revelation, and afterwards this revelation was confirmed by ordinary means. The testimony concerning it has been handed down in the churches from one generation to another. On this, and on their own internal characteristics of being divine, we receive the Scriptures with the most unsuspecting confidence, and on the same ground, the Jews received the Scriptures of the Old Testament. In these ways, it is fixed by divine authority, and not left in any uncertainty; for, if its truth can be ascertained by ordinary means, it is fixed by the authority of God, as much as if an angel from heaven were every day to proclaim it over the earth. When Paul says, that his handwriting of the salutation was the token in

every epistle, he at once shows us the importance of the canon, and warrants us in receiving it as a divine revelation attested by ordinary means. Those to whom he wrote had no other way of knowing the handwriting of the Apostle than that by which they knew any other handwriting. Even at that time the churches knew the genuineness of the epistles sent to them by ordinary means; and Paul's authority warrants this as sufficient. We have, then, the authority of revelation for resting the canon on the ordinary sources of human evidence, and they are such as to preclude the possibility of deception. The claim of the Epistles sent to the first churches, and of the doctrine they contain as divine, rested even to those churches on the same kind of evidence on which we now receive them. It is very important to settle what kind of evidence is sufficient for our receiving the Scriptures. Many have rated this too high, and as the Scriptures contain a revelation, they wished to have them attested to every age by revelation, which is, in fact, requiring the continuance of miraculous interference, which it might easily be shown would be } pernicious. *N.B.*

With respect to the validity of the internal evidence on which the canon is received, an important argument may be founded on John, iv. 39. From the account of the woman of Samaria there related, we learn the kind of evidence on which the Lord Jesus was acknowledged while on earth. The foundation of this woman's faith was the Lord's having told her all things that ever she did. This was sufficient for

her to recognise him as a prophet, or as one sent of God; and, consequently, when he declared to her that he was the Messiah, she had sufficient ground to believe so, for God would not enable any one to tell her such things in order to deceive. For if there was evidence from what he said that he was sent by God, there was evidence from his assertion that he was the Messiah.* From verse 41 of the same chapter, we learn, that "many more believed because of his own word;" and that they did so, and that the woman believed, are exhibited to us, not only as facts, but as valid grounds of belief. Jesus had not worked any miracle, and the reason why they believed on him, is expressly stated to be because of his own word. If, then, the words of Jesus, unaccompanied by miracle, was a sufficient ground of faith when he spoke, it is equally valid in writing. From hearing him, the people of Samaria could assert, with confidence, that they themselves knew that he was indeed the Christ. And from reading the Scriptures, the same satisfactory evidence is obtained. In reading the Scriptures, we are often so struck with their evidence, that, independently of any other proof, we firmly believe that they come from God. We are often most forcibly convinced by evidence which we could hardly state intelligibly to others.* The Apostles still commend themselves to every man's conscience, and we feel the force of the question, "What is the chaff to the wheat,—is not my word like a fire?" Must, then, the illiterate man receive the Scriptures as a question of erudition? Must the canonical authority of an epistle

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that recommends itself as the light of heaven, depend on questions of erudition?

Christians receive the Holy Scriptures on the authority of God, as declared by his inspired messengers, so that they are received on the ground of revelation. The illiterate are equally bound to receive them in this way, and interested in so doing, as the learned. As all are to be judged by them, it was necessary that all should have full assurance that they are from God; and it is matter of express revelation, that nothing but hatred of the light, and the love of darkness, prevents any man who reads them from receiving the truth. Both the Old Testament and the New come to us stamped with the authority of Him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," and of those to whom God bore "witness both with signs and wonders, and diverse miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost," and also with their own internal evidence of being divine. And if any portion of them be set aside as uninspired, or if any addition be made to them, it is done in spite of that authority and that evidence.

If we displace from the canon any one of those books that have been sanctioned by the recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles, we overturn the authority on which the rest are held, and invite the evil propensities of our nature to quarrel with any thing in the Bible to which we find a disrelish. Those who hold that the question of the canon is open to discussion, and who set aside any part of it on the ground of either external or internal evidence, cannot be said to have a Bible. Their Bible will be longer or

shorter, according to their researches ; and a fixed standard they can never have.

If it be asked, should we be precluded from enquiring into the grounds on which the canon is received, it is replied, certainly not. We ought to enquire into the grounds on which the canon is received, as well as into any other subject. But the permanent ground on which it stands, is testimony : and such must be the ground of every historical fact. Internal evidence may confirm the authenticity of a book sanctioned by the canon, but to suspend belief till we receive such confirmation, argues an ignorance of the principles of evidence. A book might be inspired, when no such internal confirmation, from the nature of the subject, might be found. And when a book is substantially approved, by testimony, as belonging to the canon, no evidence can, by a Christian, be legitimately supposed possible, in opposition to its inspiration. This would be to suppose valid objections to first principles. Sufficient testimony deserves the same rank as a first principle, with axioms themselves. Axioms are not more necessary than testimony, to all the business of human life. Internal evidence may be sufficient to prove that a book is not divine ; but it is absurd to suppose that such a book can have valid testimony, and therefore it can never be supposed by a Christian, that any of those books that are received as part of the sacred canon, on the authority of sufficient testimony, can contain any internal marks of imposture. This would be to suppose the possibility of the clashing of two first principles. The thing that can be proved by a legitimate first principle, can ne-

ver be disproved by another legitimate first principle.^{+ NB.} This would be to suppose that God is not the author of the human constitution. If, then, in a book recognised by the canon, as the Song of Solomon, we find matter which to our wisdom does not appear to be worthy of inspiration, we may be assured that we mistake. For if that book is authenticated by testimony as a part of the sacred Scriptures, which the Lord Jesus Christ sanctioned, it is authenticated by a first principle, to which God has bound us by the constitution of our nature to submit. If, in this instance, or in any particular instance, we reject it, our own conduct in other things will be our condemnation. There is no first principle in the constitution of man that can enable him to reject any thing in the Song of Solomon, coming, as it does, under the sanction of a first principle. Those persons who reject any books of the canon on such grounds, would show themselves much more rational, as well as more humble Christians, if, recognising the paramount authority of a first principle universally acknowledged, they would receive the Song of Solomon and the Book of Esther, or any other of the books that they now reject, as parts of the Word of God, and humbly endeavour to gain from them the instruction and edification which, as divine books, they must be calculated to give. This questioning of the canon, then, proceeds on infidel and irrational principles, which, if carried to their legitimate length, must end in complete unbelief.

“According to your way of proceeding,” observes Augustine, in reference to those who supposed that

the Scriptures had been interpolated or corrupted, and the observation is equally applicable to all who add to, or reject, certain parts of the sacred canon—"According to your way of proceeding, the authority of Scripture is quite destroyed, and every one's fancy is to determine what in the Scriptures is to be received, and what not. He does not admit it, because it is found in writings of so great credit and authority; but it is rightly written, because it is agreeable to his judgment. Into what confusion and uncertainty must men be brought by such a principle!"

It is a wonderful circumstance in the providence of God, that while the two parts of Scripture were delivered to two classes, with the fullest attestation of their divine original, both the one and the other have been faithful in preserving the precious trust respectively committed to them, while they have both been rebellious in regard to that part of which they were not originally appointed the depositaries. The Jews always held the books of the Old Testament in the highest veneration, and continued to preserve them, without addition or diminution, until the coming of Him concerning whom they testify, and they have kept them entire to this day; yet they have altogether rejected the New Testament Scriptures. And while Christians have all agreed in preserving the Scriptures of the New Testament entire and uncorrupted, they have wickedly adulterated those of the Old by a spurious addition, or have retrenched certain portions of them. Of the divine original of the Sacred Scriptures, as we now possess them, we have evidence the most abundant

and diversified. It is the distinguishing characteristic of the Gospel, that it is preached to the poor, and God has so ordered it, that the authenticity of that word by which all are to be judged, should not be presented to them as a matter of doubtful disputation.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY
SCRIPTURES.

THE Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are not only genuine and authentic, but also inspired writings. The claim of inspiration which they advance, is a claim of infallibility and of perfection. It is also a claim of absolute authority, which demands unlimited submission. It is a claim which, if set up for any other book, might, with the utmost ease, be shown to be unfounded.

The inspiration of the Scriptures is attested, both by the nature and value of their contents, and by the evidence of their truth. On these grounds, they stand without a rival in the world, and challenge from every man the highest possible regard.

Our knowledge of the inspiration of the Bible, like every other doctrine it contains, must be collected from itself. If the writers of this book appear with such credentials as entitle them to be received as commissioned of God, then it is from themselves only we can learn those truths which they are authorized to make known. Among these, it is of primary importance to know what is the extent of that dependence which we are to place on their words. Is implicit credit to be given to every thing they declare?

and, if the writers are numerous, is this equally due to them all ?

The question of inspiration has been viewed as one of the utmost difficulty ; and, accordingly, various theories have been invented to explain it. To those who consider the subject merely in the light of the Bible itself, (the only source of legitimate information on any matter of revelation,) it may appear surprising that this doctrine should be supposed to present any difficulties at all. Nothing can be more clearly, more expressly, or more precisely taught in the word of God. And while other important doctrines may be met with passages of seeming opposition, there is not in the language of the Scriptures one expression that even appears to contradict their plenary or verbal inspiration. Whence, then, it may be asked, has arisen the idea of difficulty so general among the learned, but utterly unknown to the great body of Christians. It has wholly arisen from a profane desire to penetrate into the manner of the divine operation on the mind of man in the communication of revealed truth. Instead of coming to the Scriptures in a childlike manner, and humbly submitting to what they teach on this subject, many have occupied themselves in forming a scale for determining how far divine assistance was afforded to the sacred penmen in the different parts of their writings ; and, according to almost all those who have discussed this subject, some parts of Scripture require only a very small degree of divine assistance. But as the Scriptures assert the inspiration equally of all their parts, these writers are obliged to denominate even this slight assistance as a

kind of inspiration. Some, accordingly, make three degrees or kinds of inspiration, while others add a fourth. To the *Superintendence*, *Elevation*, and *Suggestion*, of Doddridge, has been added *Direction*. And some, substantially agreeing in the doctrine of different degrees, quarrel with the terms by which these distinctions are designated, and for *Suggestion*, have substituted *Revelation*, as more appropriately expressing the highest degree in the scale of inspiration.

To these speculations, though very generally adopted, the writers of the Scriptures give not the slightest countenance or support. Such being the fact, and as the question of inspiration can only be determined by the Scriptures themselves, all the distinctions that have been introduced are nothing better than vain and unsubstantial theories, unfounded and unsupported by any evidence. The Scriptures contain no intimation of their being written under an inspiration of any kind but one. "*All Scripture*," says Paul, "*is given by inspiration of God*." This declaration refers to the whole of the Old Testament, which Timothy had known from his childhood. But as the greater part of the New Testament was at that time published, and as the whole of it is uniformly classed by its writers with the Old Testament, this expression of Paul equally applies to the New Testament. The Apostle Peter classes *all* the Epistles of Paul, which he ascribes to the wisdom given to him, with "the other Scriptures," thereby declaring them to be of the same authority, and showing that all the writings, both of the Old and New Testament, went by the name of "Scriptures."

It appears to me that the whole argument of this book rests on the meaning of the word "*Scriptures*". If, as Mr. Noble has endeavoured to shew, this term is not applied to the writings of the *Seiographa*, Mr. Haldane's argument is not sound, and is conclusory, and must come to the ground. Mr. Noble draws an opposite inference from this text, and endeavours to shew that "*other Scriptures*" implies a difference in them. App't to Plan. Insp. note, page 14. This view seems to me to be favoured by a comparison of the 29th of Peter 1 ch. 91. ver. with the 3 ch. 15. ver. of the same

Inspiration belongs to the original writings. No one contends for any degree of inspiration in the transcribers in different ages. Accuracy in the copies they have made is, under the providence of God, by which he always perfectly attains his purposes, secured by the fidelity of those to whom the Scriptures have been committed—by the opposition of parties watching each other, as of Jews and Christians, and of various sects—and by the great multiplication of copies and translations into different languages, which took place so early.

The inspiration spoken of in the book of Job, xxxii. 8, where it is said, “There is a spirit in men, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding,” appears to refer to the communication of those intellectual powers with which man is endowed by his Creator. Every Christian has, besides this, an unction from the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in him, through whom he was born again, and by whose influence his spiritual life is maintained. There have also been various miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on the servants of God, and among these is that inspiration, by means of which God has revealed himself in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The word *inspire* signifies to breathe into, and literally corresponds to the original in 2 Tim. iii. 16. All Scripture is *inspired by God*, or *breathed into the writers by God*. It is, therefore, of the writing or communication that the inspiration is asserted. The Greek compound word, corresponding to our phrase *inspired by God*, was applied among the heathens to

such dreams as were supposed to be breathed into men by any of the gods. This inspiration, which, without any variation or exception, is claimed by the writers of the Scripture^x, and which entitles the whole of it to be denominated “the Word of God,” is of the highest kind by which they were “led into all truth.”

Sec note page
94.

It consists in that communication made to their minds by the Spirit of God, of the ideas and words which they have recorded in that sacred book^x. Paul expressly calls the Old Testament Scriptures “the ORACLES of God,” which were committed to the Jews.—Rom. iii. 2. He afterwards gives the same denomination of “oracles” to all the revealed truth of God.—Heb. v. 12. The same expression was used by the Greeks to denote the responses given out in distinct words, which their priests made, in name of their deities, to those who consulted them. In the same sense, Stephen, speaking under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, refers to what the angel *spoke* to Moses on Mount Sinai under the appellation of “lively oracles.” In this expression the *verbal* inspiration of the whole of the Scriptures is distinctly asserted.

In the passage already quoted, “*all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,*” the same thing is explicitly declared. Here Paul does not say the *meaning* of all Scripture, or the *ideas* contained in it, but all *Scripture*—all *writing*, or all that is *written* (taking writing in the appropriated sense in which he uses it) is given by inspiration of God. Here then we have a most unequivocal testimony to the inspiration of the *words* of Scripture, for neither a mean-

ing, nor an idea, can be expressed in writing, except by words. If any writing is inspired, the words of necessity must be inspired, because the words are the writing; for what is a writing, but words written? The thoughts and sentiments are the meaning of the words. To say that a writing is inspired, while the words are uninspired, is a contradiction in terms. To the same purpose, the Apostle Peter affirms, "*the prophecy came not of old time (at any time) by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" If they spake as they were moved, they did not choose the language they uttered, but the words which they spoke were given to them by the Holy Ghost. In the same manner the Disciples, on the day of Pentecost, "*were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*" Here then utterance, or the words they spoke, is expressly ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Nothing can more distinctly convey the meaning of inspiration than these words, "*who by the mouth of thy servant David hath said.*"—Acts, iv. 25. And this inspiration, which without variation or exception is claimed for the Scriptures by the sacred writers, entitles the whole of them to be called "*the word of God,*" to which high designation they could not be entitled on any other ground.

The words of Scripture, indeed, as used by the writers, were their own words, that is, the words which they employed. But this does not convey the idea that the Bible is partly the word of God, and partly the word of man. It is not the effect of any

*Flatly contradicted in the next page. It is not the essence of this proposition. True also? "If they chose the language they uttered they were not moved by the Holy Ghost in the same sense as those who were 'carried away,' 'rapt,' 'transported'; taken altogether out of themselves, and possessed entirely by the power of God. Such is the force of the original word *trains* translated 'moved.' See Tobler's *Præp.* chap. page 56

such co-operation, as supposes that one part was produced by God, and the other part by man, to make out a whole. The passages above quoted preclude our entertaining any such notion. Because the words were written by the Prophets and Apostles, this does not prevent them from being the words of God. The following remarks of President Edwards, when he is combating the deeply erroneous sentiment of the Arminians respecting a co-operation between God and man in the work of grace, will explain this matter. "In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz. our own acts. God is the only proper author and foundation: we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive and wholly active. In the Scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert, and men are said to convert and turn. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart. God circumcises the heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts; not merely because we must use the means in order to the effect, but the effect itself is our act and our duty. These things are agreeable to that text, 'God worketh in you both to will and to do.'" — Edwards's Remarks, &c. 251.

How inconsistent is this passage with that in page 92: and how clearly does it tend to point out the difference between that which is truly the "Word of God" and the other books of the Bible. The prophets did not seek to find out acceptable words, but the Lord put words into their mouths. Exod. 4-15. Num. 23-5. Deut. 18. 18. Isa. 51-16 Jer. 1-9. Besides, how could the prophets use their understandings, even in the selection of words, when treating of things which it is confessed they did not understand. — See pag. 128. 132. — 2 K. 13

Eccles. xii. 10. But the Holy Spirit, who is more intimate into the minds and skill of men than they are themselves, did so guide and operate in them, as that the words they fixed upon were as directly and certainly from him, as if they had been spoken to them by an audible voice."—Owen on the Spirit, Book ii. ch. i. sect. 20.

We are not, however, required to suppose, that while inspired, the ordinary exercise of the faculties of the penmen of the Scriptures was counteracted or suspended, or that their minds did not entirely go along with what was communicated to them. They were all "filled with the Holy Ghost," Acts. xi. 4. They "had the mind of Christ," 1 Cor. xi. 15; and were themselves cast into the mould of that doctrine which they delivered to others. We are certain, then, as appears from the whole of their writings, that as far as they comprehended the truths which they were employed to record, they both fully acquiesced in them, and powerfully felt their force. It forms no objection to this inspiration, that the words of Scripture are occasionally changed in parallel passages or quotations, by Him who dictated them. The Holy Spirit is not confined to any one mode of expression, and in such places his mind is conveyed in words, which, though varied by him, are yet perfectly adapted to communicate his will.

Nor does the difference of style which we find among these writers at all conclude against their having the words they were to write imparted to them. The style that God was pleased to employ was used, and the instruments were such as that style was na-

tural to, flowing, like the words, with their full consent, and according to the particular tone of their minds, while they yielded to the impression as voluntary and intelligent agents. The Holy Spirit could dictate to them his own words in such a way that they would also be their words, uttered with the understanding. He could speak the same thought by the mouth of a thousand persons, each in his own style. Is it then because we cannot comprehend the mode of such an operation, that arrogant and weak mortals dare to deny the obvious import of Scripture declarations?

The objection to verbal inspiration, taken from the variety of style among the sacred writers, though at first sight it may seem plausible, is, in reality, both unfounded and absurd. It is taking it for granted that two or more accounts of the same thing differing in phraseology, though substantially agreeing, cannot all be the words of inspiration, which has not the smallest foundation in truth. If variety of expression in relating the same things in the Gospel, would not affect the truth of the narrative, on the supposition that the writers were uninspired men, why is it presumed that it would affect it on the supposition of their being inspired; and why should it be thought improper for the Holy Ghost to make use of that variety? Or, because one peculiar cast of style distinguishes every man's writings, is it thought impossible that the Spirit of God can employ a variety of styles; or is it supposed that He must be confined to one single mode of expression? The simple statement of such an idea contains its refutation. It

is evident, too, that variety of style militates no more against verbal inspiration, than against the supposed inspiration of *superintendence*; for if the Holy Spirit sanctioned variety, it was equally consistent to dictate variety. And it might be shown that such variety is of essential importance in the Gospel narratives in bringing out very interesting views, that could not be so well exhibited in a single narrative. *

Of the fact, however, that the variety of style which is found among the writers of the Scriptures does not in the smallest degree militate against that verbal inspiration by which they affirm that they wrote, we have conclusive proof. For while it is evident to all, that there is a certain characteristic distinction of style, that pervades the whole of the Scriptures, and sufficiently attests that they are the work of the same author, it is equally certain that each one of the writers is distinguished from the rest by a style peculiar to himself. Now the difference of style is as great among the prophets, when predicting future events, which they did not understand, where, *as is admitted by all, the words they employed must necessarily have been communicated to them*, as it is found to be among them when relating events with which they were previously acquainted. Here, then, we have positive proof on this subject, which it is impossible to set aside. The objection, too, that is founded on variety of style, to the communication of *words*, would equally militate against the communication of *ideas*. *There is as great diversity of MODES OF THOUGHT, and of viewing their subjects, as of EXPRESSION AND STYLE, among the writers of Scripture.* And can it for a moment be

Mr Noble has shown this beautifully in his book. See page 580, and following. I cannot help suspecting that Mr. Hal is indebted to him for this suggestion, as he or some other wrote the New Testament for another which he says on page 81 easily be s.

supposed, that either as to the one or the other, the Spirit of God is limited? "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" "Who hath made man's mouth, or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind, did not I the Lord?" He who conferred upon men all the varied powers and faculties which they possess, is he not able to communicate to their minds whatever seems to him good, in every possible variety of expression, and in every conceivable shape?

It has been objected, that if the verbal inspiration of the whole of the Scriptures could be proved, it would follow, that the words of all the speakers who are introduced in them, such as those of Job's friends, although their opinions were erroneous, nay even the words of the devil himself, were inspired. This objection is so absurd, that unless it had been sometimes gravely urged, it would be too trifling to be noticed. Is it not sufficiently plain, that while God dictated to the sacred penmen the words of those referred to, he dictated them to be inserted, not as his words, but as their words? Every thing contained in the Bible, whether the words of the penmen, that contain the mind of God, or the words of others, that are inserted for the purpose of giving such information as he is pleased to impart, is equally, according to the express declarations of Scripture, dictated by God. It should, however, be observed, that it is not at all implied in the assertion of plenary verbal inspiration, that every example recorded in Scripture, without any judgment expressed with regard to the conduct of good, or even

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inspired men, should be for imitation. When the Word of God records human conduct, without pronouncing on its morality, whether it is sin or duty must be ascertained by an appeal to the general principles of Scripture.

It is no valid objection to verbal inspiration, that the sacred writers were often acquainted beforehand with those facts which they recorded, and that they were directed to refer to this knowledge to establish their credibility. This no more proves that their relating these facts originated with themselves, than the previous knowledge of a messenger of the contents of the message he bears, proves that it originated with himself, or detracts from its truth or authority. Nor does it form any objection that the penmen of Scripture often appeal, in support of what they advance, to its own evidence, or that they reason from principles granted by those whom they addressed. This was practised by the Lord himself, as to whose words no Christian will affirm that they are not the words of God.

There is a simplicity, harmony, and consistency, in that plan which represents the Scriptures as, in one point of view, the production of man, and in another wholly the book of God. This is precisely consistent with the language of the Apostle Paul, when he sometimes designates the Gospel, "my Gospel," and sometimes, "the Gospel of God," it being, in fact, both the one and the other. Though the deepest wisdom of man could never have anticipated such a scheme of inspiration, yet, when it is submitted to the mind, it manifests itself to be divine. And nothing

but this view will harmonize all the assertions of the Scriptures.

The subject of the inspiration of the Bible has been too much disregarded among Christians; many have not attended to it at all, while others have ventured to indulge in vain speculations respecting it. But like every other doctrine, the nature of divine inspiration ought to be carefully enquired into, and the truth respecting it received with the most unreserved submission. It will be proper, then, to consider it solely in the light which the Word of God affords; and for this purpose, after attending to the objections that have been derived from erroneous views of the meaning of certain passages of Scripture, to exhibit the ample proofs contained in the sacred record, which unequivocally substantiate its own plenary inspiration in every part, without one single exception.

The inspiration of certain parts of the Scriptures is frequently denied, on the supposition that the Apostles themselves "sometimes candidly admit, that they are not speaking by inspiration." This objection proceeds on a mistaken view of the meaning of the passages on which it is founded.

In the 7th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul is supposed, in some places, to disclaim inspiration, and, in one place, not to be certain whether he is inspired or not. This, at first sight, will appear to be evidently contrary to the uniform style of this Apostle's writings, and altogether improbable, when, as a commissioned and accredited ambassador of Jesus Christ, he is answering certain questions put to him by a Christian church, to whom

he had just before in the most explicit manner asserted, that he spoke "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" and that he was addressing them "in the name of the Lord Jesus," 1 Cor. ii. 13, and v. 4. Attention to these things might have prevented the adoption of the unfounded and mistaken meaning that has been affixed to the passages referred to, which tends to unsettle the minds of Christians respecting the inspiration of the Scriptures. No such indecision, however, attaches to the passages in question.

In answer to the question about marriage, Paul says, 1 Cor. vii. 6, "I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." Does this mean, that the Spirit permitted him, but did not command him, to give the answer he had done? Even upon this supposition, the Apostle's declaration must be according to the mind of the Spirit; for Paul could not, on such an occasion, have been permitted to say what was contrary to it. But this would have been a very extraordinary and unusual mode of communicating that mind, and evidently is not what is here intended. The obvious meaning is, that what the Apostle here said was in the way of permission, not of commandment. "I speak this," says he, "as a permission, and not as a commandment;" and without this, the Apostle might have been understood as enjoining marriage as an indispensable duty. In the second epistle to the same church, chap. viii. 8, the Apostle expresses himself to the same purpose, in a passage which no one misunderstands. Again, at the 10th verse—"Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord." This

nothing to do with the law of Moses, and who, being not bound by that law required no repeal of it.

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commandment had been delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The Apostle, therefore, had no new commandment to deliver to them, or no commandment from himself only, but one which the Lord had given. "To the rest," says he, "speak I, not the Lord." There was no former commandment given by the Lord, to which he might here refer them; on this point, therefore, he now delivers to them the will of God. So far, indeed, was this commandment from having been given before, that it was the repeal of an old one, by which, under the Jewish dispensation, the people were commanded to put away their wives, if heathens.[†] Can it, then, be supposed, that the Apostle is speaking from himself, and not under the dictation of the Holy Ghost, when he is declaring the abrogation of a part of the law of God?

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"Now, concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." Here again no commandment had formerly been given, to which Paul could refer those to whom he wrote. But now, he gave his judgment as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful in the discharge of that ministry which he had received, to deliver the whole counsel of God to man.^o "I think also that I have the Spirit of God." In this, as in many other passages, the word translated, "I think,"* does not

—PARKHURST.

* "On 1 Cor. vii. 40, Wolfius remarks, that the v. *δὲν* imports not an uncertain opinion, but conviction and knowledge, as John, v. 39. So in *Xenophon*, *Cyropæd.*, at the end of the proem, *ἠσθόθνα* ΔΟΚΟΥΜΕΝ, expresses assurance, not doubt."

—PARKHURST.
ply that he personally had received no commandment, as fully as the
lter implies that he personally gave his judgment. It is giving the words
strange twist to make the first part apply to the church generally,
and the second to St. Paul individually.

mean doubting, but certainty. If Paul meant it to be understood, that he was not certain whether he was inspired or not, it would contradict all he has so often positively declared, in the same Epistle, on the subject of his inspiration, both before the expression in question, and afterwards, when he says, chap. xiv. 37, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that *the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*" And it would stand directly opposed to what he affirms, 1 Thess. iv. 8, "He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." But so far is this from being the case, that in order more deeply to impress the minds of those to whom he wrote, with the importance of what he had said, Paul concludes by assuring them, that he was *certain* that he wrote by the Spirit of God.

The only other passage in which this Apostle is supposed to disclaim inspiration occurs in 2 Cor. xi. 17:—"That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting." In this passage Paul does not refer to the authority, but to the example, of the Lord. "I speak not according to the example or manner of the Lord, but after the manner of fools:"^x a manner which, as he tells the Corinthians in the next chapter, they had compelled him to adopt. Such is the true sense of the above passages; but even if the mistaken meaning that is so often attributed to them, were the just one, they would not at all militate against the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, because in that case Paul

admitting this explanation, the distinction between the manner of the Lord speaking and the manner of fools is here most striking. They are put in direct opposition; and St. Paul expressly declares that he speaks after the manner of fools, by compulsion. Does not the supposition

must be viewed as having been inspired to write precisely as he has done, since they form a part of Scripture, all of which is given by inspiration of God.

Another passage in the Second Epistle of Peter, i. 19, is frequently quoted, so as to invalidate the Apostolic testimony. Peter had just before declared, that on the mount of transfiguration, he and the other Apostles had been eye-witnesses of the majesty of Jesus Christ, and had heard the voice from heaven, which attested that he was the beloved Son of God. Yet, after this, he is supposed to refer Christians to the word of prophecy, as "more sure" than this testimony. Instead of this, which is evidently a very improper view of the passage, degrading to the testimony of the Apostles, (than which there is nothing in heaven, or on earth, more absolutely certain,) he refers to the prophecies, now made "more firm" or "confirmed" by what they had witnessed.*

Two passages are quoted from Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, v. 23, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities." And 2 Tim. iv. 13, "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." These passages, it is supposed, are of

* "He," the Apostle, "does not oppose," says *Wetstein*, "the prophetic word to fables, or to the transfiguration seen by himself. . . . But the prophetic word is *more firm* now, as it has been confirmed by the event, than it was before the event. So the Greek interpreters understood the passage."—

so unimportant a nature, that they cannot be the dictates of inspiration. Such a conclusion, even if we could not discover their use, would be altogether unwarrantable. On the same principle we might reject many other parts of Scripture, the import of which we do not understand ; but in doing so, we should act both as absurdly and irreverently as the daring infidel, who might assert that a worm or a mushroom was not the workmanship of God, because it appeared to him insignificant ; or that the whole world was not created by God, because it contained deserts and barren wastes, the use of which he could not comprehend.

In reference to the above passages, Dr Doddridge makes the following remarks : “ There are *other objections* of a quite different class, with which I have no concern ; because they affect only *such a degree of inspiration*, as I think it *not prudent*, and I am sure it is *not necessary*, to assert. I leave them therefore to be *answered by those*, if any such there be, who imagine that *Paul* would need *an immediate Revelation* from Heaven, and a miraculous dictate of the *Holy Ghost*, to remind *Timothy of the cloak and writings which he left at Troas*, or to advise him to *minge a little wine with his water*.”* Modern writers on inspiration have likewise singled out these two passages, together with the shipwreck of Paul on the island of Melita, as uninspired, because they conceive that “ these were not things of a religious nature.”

* Dissertation on the Inspiration of the New Testament, in Appendix to the Harmony of the Evangelists, p. 58.

Respecting the account of the Apostle's shipwreck, there are few things to be found in the historical parts of the Bible that are more truly valuable, whether we consider the delightful and encouraging views it affords of the providential dealings of the Lord in every circumstance of the life of his people, or attend to the unparalleled illustration it furnishes of the manner by which the purposes of God are, in the use of means, carried into effect. Nothing could be more worthy of inspiration than the recording of this portion of Scripture; and so far from not being of a religious nature, the account it contains is fraught with the most important religious instruction. As to the objection that is founded on the two passages in the Epistles to Timothy, it being both commonly made, and resorted to as one of the *strongholds* of those who oppose the verbal inspiration of the whole of Scripture, it requires to be examined at some length. Instead of being so trifling as to render them unworthy to be a part of divine Revelation, they present considerations of very high interest.

In the first of these passages, it is said, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities." A due consideration of the nature of the office of Paul, who gave this injunction to Timothy, and of the Epistle in which it is contained, as a part of the oracles of God, as well as of the service in which Timothy was engaged, ought to have deterred any one from rashly concluding that this verse forms no part of the words of inspiration. The connexion, too, in which it is found, embodied in one of the most solemn addresses to be met with

in the Scriptures, assures us that it must contain something of importance. “*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins : keep thyself pure. Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake, and thine often infirmities. Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment ; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand ; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.*” Can it be imagined that,—in the midst of an address, in which, if the language of inspiration is to be found in the Bible, the Apostle is speaking by it,—before the charge is completed, which contains a permanent law in the kingdom of Christ, the course of that inspiration is suddenly interrupted, and broken in upon, by a remark merely human, “not of a religious nature”—by an advice, which, originating with the Apostle, might not be judicious? On the contrary, being fully assured that the verse in question is, like the other parts of the charge that precede and follow it, dictated by the Divine Spirit, we are prepared to regard it as containing what is worthy of its author, and deserving of our attention. Proceeding, then, to examine it, under the settled conviction that it is given by inspiration of God, and that it is profitable for instruction in righteousness, I observe, That while enjoining upon Timothy many arduous and laborious duties, the Apostle was inspired to admonish him to attend to his health, in order to fit him for their

right discharge ; and hence Timothy was taught, and we learn, that it is the duty of every man to have a regard for his health, even amidst the most important labours, in order that he may be more fitted for the service of God, and that his life may be prolonged in that service.

2. We learn the abstemiousness of Timothy, notwithstanding his bodily weakness, and abundant labours.

3. That his abstemiousness was even carried the length of an unnecessary austerity, and that although he had a good end in view, this over-abstemiousness was wrong, and was therefore corrected by the Apostle. Hence, we learn how apt we are to err, even when our intentions are good, and how necessary it is to receive direction from the Lord.

4. If Timothy was in an error respecting the lawfulness of using wine, that error is here corrected ; but whether this was the case or not, it was a matter of importance to instruct believers on this point, on which, as it appears from Rom. xiv. 21, a diversity of opinion existed in the churches. The lawfulness of the use of wine was denied by the Essenes, a sect among the Jews, as was afterwards the case with different Christian sects. This error may have been imbibed by them, or confirmed by the law of the Nazarites, or from a partial attention to the manner in which the Rechabites, who abstained from wine, were held up as an example of obedience to the people of Israel. In this view of the passage, it contains a most salutary and necessary corrective of what might otherwise have become extensively prejudicial in the king-

dom of Christ; and it proves a useful comment, in the way of warning, on what the Apostle had said a little before, concerning a defection that was to take place in the latter times, in which false teachers were to command men to abstain from meats which God had created, to be received with thanksgiving, chap. iii. 3.

5. Use “a little wine.” Here we are instructed in the duty of temperance. We are taught to use the bounties of Providence with moderation, and in subordination to our sustenance and bodily health.

6. If the error of those who live too abstemiously, so as to hurt their health, be here corrected; how much more does this passage condemn those who exceed in a contrary extreme, and who impair their constitutions by intemperance!

7. From this passage, as from some others, *e. g.* Phil. ii. 27, we learn that the Apostles had it not in their power on every occasion, even when they might be desirous of it, to work miraculous cures, and that the gift of healing, at that time vouchsafed, did not preclude the use of means for the preservation of health.

8. This passage sanctions the medical profession. This is very important, as some Christians have been inclined to think, that to have recourse to a physician is to supersede the interposition of God. Now, the prescription of Paul to Timothy was a medical prescription, founded on the fitness of the medicinal qualities of wine. Christians ought, indeed, to look to God for their cure, so ought they for the nourishment of their bodies, for man does not live by bread

alone, but both food and *medicine* are to be taken as the means appointed by God, as we here learn.

The other passage referred to, occurs in Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy, ch. iv. 13, "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." This passage, like the former, is introduced in the midst of very solemn considerations, in connexion with an annunciation of the Apostle Paul's trial for his life, and in the immediate prospect of his martyrdom. In his desire to have his cloak brought to him from a distance, a proof is recorded at the close of his ministry, of Paul's disinterestedness in his labours among the churches. We are here reminded of his resolution, and are taught how faithfully he adhered to it, to make the gospel of God without charge; and in the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, not to abuse his power of receiving support in preaching the Gospel, or to allow his glorying on the ground of his disinterestedness to be made void, 1 Cor. ix. 13-18. On the approach of winter, in a cold prison, and at the termination of his course, the Apostle Paul appears here to be a follower indeed of him who had not where to lay his head. He is presented to our view as actually enduring those hardships, which elsewhere he describes in a manner so affecting—"in prisons,—in cold, in nakedness." He had abandoned, as he elsewhere informs us, all the fair prospects that once opened to him of worldly advantages, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and had suffered the loss of all things; and in this Epistle we see all that he has said

on the subject, embodied and verified. He is about to suffer death for the testimony of Jesus; and now he requests one of the few friends that still adhered to him, (all the others, as he tells us, having forsaken him,) to do his diligence to come before winter, and to bring to him his cloak. Here, in his solemn farewell address, of which the verse before us forms a part,—the last of his writings, and which contains a passage of unrivalled grandeur,—the Apostle of the Gentiles is exhibited in a situation deeply calculated to affect us. We behold him standing upon the confines of the two worlds,—in this world about to be beheaded, as guilty, by the Emperor of Rome,—in the other world to be crowned, as righteous, by the King of kings,—here deserted by men, there to be welcomed by angels,—here in want of a cloak to cover him, there to be clothed upon with his house from heaven!

Dr Doddridge, in his commentary on the passage before us, has the following note. “*Bring with thee that cloak.* If *φελωνην* here signifies *cloak*, or *mantle*, it is, as *Grotius* justly observes, a proof of *Paul’s* poverty, that he had occasion to send so far for such a garment, which probably was not quite a new one.” Since, as we here learn, this observation of *Grotius* appeared *just* to Dr Doddridge, it might have prevented him from rashly treating the subject with the levity which appears in his remark, formerly quoted, and from *thinking* it not “prudent” to assert, that the text was dictated by the Holy Spirit. The observation of *Grotius* to which he refers, is as follows: “See the poverty of so great an Apostle, who con-

sidered so small a matter, left at such a distance, to be a loss to him !” On the same place, Erasmus remarks : “ Behold the Apostle’s household furniture, a cloak to defend him from rain, and a few books !” Here, then, we are reminded incidentally (a manner of instruction common in the Word of God) of Paul’s poverty. In the low, distressed circumstances of the Apostles, we see the Lord’s warnings, as to the reception they were to meet with from the world, and the hardships and privations they were to experience, fully verified. The evidence of the truth of the Gospel, which arises from the suffering condition of those who were first employed to propagate it, is calculated to produce on our minds the strongest conviction of its divine origin. In the wisdom of God it appears to have been appointed for this end ; and it is all along kept in view, in the accounts transmitted in the Scriptures concerning them. “ I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles the last, as it were appointed to death : for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.— Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place.” 1 Cor. iv. 9-11.

Paul also desires Timothy to bring with him the “ books, but especially the parchments.” Whatever these parchments were, the use that Paul intended to make of them would be well known to Timothy, and in it he might have a further example of the Apostle’s zeal, and unwearied exertion in the service of God. By this passage we may be taught, that even those who were so highly favoured with the most

distinguished gifts, were not raised above the necessity of using means for their own improvement, and for the stirring up of those gifts that were in them ; and if this was the case respecting them, how forcibly is the duty here inculcated upon us, to give diligence to retain the knowledge of divine things which we may already possess, and to seek to add to our present attainments, whatever we may suppose them to be ! We are certain that they were not useless books, which the Apostle required to be brought to him at such a time, and from so great a distance. They must have been intended to be profitable to himself, or in some way to be turned to the advancement of that cause, to promote which was his only desire, and for which he was now about to suffer. In any, or all of these views, the contents of this verse may convey instruction, and afford an example to us ; and at any rate we can no more conceive that the course of inspiration is here interrupted, without the smallest intimation to this effect, (of which an example in the whole Bible cannot be produced,) than we can believe it was the case concerning the verse which we formerly considered.

In the former of the above passages, we observe Paul evincing his kindness and sympathy, and attending to the wants of a fellow labourer ; in the latter, to his own wants. Is there any thing in either of them beneath the dignity of Divine Revelation ? In prescribing, by his Apostle, the use of wine, which he would bless for the re-establishment of the health of Timothy, the Lord acted in the same manner as when he directed his Prophet to order the application of

“a lump of figs,” for the cure of King Hezekiah. Was it beneath the dignity of Him who turned water into wine at a marriage feast, to order the use of wine for the preservation of Timothy’s health, instead of the use of water? Was this unworthy of that Lord who had condescended so far to the indulgence of the feelings of his people, as to cause it to be engrossed in his law, that the man who had planted a vineyard, and had not eaten of it, should not go out to war, lest he should die in the battle? Deut. xx. 6.

So far from there being any thing in these passages beneath the dignity of a revelation from God, or unworthy of his character, they are entirely consistent with the one, and strikingly illustrative of the other. And it is only when we consider them, not as the word of man, but as “*the word of God*,” that we discover their beauty and their use. It is God himself who there speaks. He who is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, condescends to the weakness and to the wants of his servants. Nothing that interests them escapes his notice. The hairs of their head are all numbered, and the smallest circumstance of their lot is ordered by the providence of God. What a striking illustration do these two passages afford, of those affecting considerations which Jesus presented to his disciples, Luke, xii. 22–30, in order to withdraw their minds from the cares and anxieties to which they are so prone to yield during their earthly pilgrimage! Viewing these verses in this light, as *the words of God himself*, can any thing be more adapted to foster the spirit of adoption, or to lead us to cry, Abba, Father? And should they be expunged from

the Sacred Record, as incompatible with the idea we ought to form of inspiration, and unworthy of proceeding from God ? But it is at such passages as these that the blind infidel scoffs, while the injudicious or ill-instructed Christian considers them as useless, and converts them into an argument against the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.

On the same principle that the admonition to Timothy, to drink no longer water, but to use a little wine for the benefit of his health, is rejected as unworthy of verbal inspiration, ought not the truth of the miracle wrought at the marriage at Cana in Galilee, of turning water into wine, to be denied, and the occasion deemed unworthy of miraculous interposition ; and especially of its being exhibited as the first of the miracles of Jesus ? Shall we be told that *it* also was a “ thing not of a religious nature,” that it was not worthy to be recorded by the pen of inspiration, that it is not “ *prudent*” to speak of such a passage as inspired ; or to admit with those, “ *if any such there be, who imagine*” that Jesus first manifested forth his glory, by turning a little water into wine ?

The levity, not to say the profaneness, of this manner of treating the Holy Scriptures, ought to be held in abhorrence. Their paramount authority, and their unity as the Word of God, are thus set aside. The Bible is converted into another book ; and a new revelation, were such licentious principles of interpretation admitted, would become indispensable to teach the humble Christian, who takes it for “ a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path,”—what portion of it he is to consider as from God, and what portion

as from man,—what parts of it are of “a religious nature,” from which he may derive edification, and in which he may converse with God,—and what parts relate only to “common or civil affairs,” with which he has no concern, and respecting which it would not be *prudent* to speak of them as inspired. If, in this manner, inspiration is first denied to the words, and next to such things as are supposed not to be “of a religious nature,” the progress to the non-inspiration of whole books of Scripture is perfectly easy and natural; and, if whole books are rejected, then, both the authenticity and inspiration of the whole of the Scriptures are subverted. For, if the canon has admitted one uninspired book, there is no security that it has not admitted more; and if that canon has been recognised by Jesus Christ with one uninspired book, every book in the collection may be uninspired, notwithstanding that recognition. If the Apostle Paul has asserted the inspiration of the whole volume, while one book is uninspired, no book in the volume can be received on his authority. The discovery, in like manner, of one single passage in the Scriptures not dictated by the Holy Ghost, would make void the declaration, that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” and would render inspiration necessary to tell us what part of it is inspired, and what is not. According to those writers who deny the doctrine of plenary inspiration, we have not the pure Word of God; for much that we have under that designation, is solely the word of man.

Let those who treat the Scriptures in this manner pause, and review the principles on which they are

proceeding ; and let them not perplex “ plain Christians ” with their rash and unhallowed speculations. The great body of believers receive, with implicit credence, the whole contents of the Bible, as the oracles of God ;—they venture not either to add to it, or to take from it. Convinced that it is the book of God, they treat even those parts of it which they do not understand with humble reverence ; and in them is fulfilled what is written, Math. xi. 25, while the fancied wisdom and knowledge of many learned critics has perverted them. Isaiah, xlvii. 10. Those who, in the spirit of little children, read in the Epistles of Paul to Timothy, that “ all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” will not easily be induced to believe, that in the very same Epistles the Apostle has contradicted his own declaration, and has afforded at least two examples of the fallacy and unsoundness of what he had, almost in the same breath, so solemnly affirmed. And *it is upon the general ground of these passages being found in Scripture, independently of the meaning which may be affixed to them*, that we denounce the profane manner in which they have been treated, and hold them to be a portion of the Word of God. It was in this light that Origen, who was born towards the end of the second century, viewed those parts of Scripture as inspired, of which he was not able to discover the use. The following are his words, when quoting Mark, x. 50 : “ Shall we say that the Evangelist wrote without thought, when he related the man’s casting away his garment, and leaping and coming to Jesus ? and shall we dare to say that these things were inserted in the Gospels in vain ? For my part,

I believe that not one jot or tittle of the Divine instruction is in vain.—We are never to say that there is any thing impertinent or superfluous in the Scriptures of the Holy Spirit, though to some they may seem obscure. But we are to turn the eyes of our mind to Him who commanded these things to be written, and seek of Him the interpretation of them.—The sacred Scriptures come from the fulness of the Spirit; so that there is nothing in the Prophets, or the Law, or the Gospel, or the Apostles, which descends not from the fulness of the Divine Majesty.” “Well knowing,” says Irenæus, “that the Scriptures are perfect, as dictated (or spoken) by the Word of God and his Spirit—a heavy punishment awaits those who add to, or take from, the Scriptures.”

The inspiration of Luke, in writing the account of Paul’s shipwreck, and that of Paul, in writing for his cloak, stand upon the same foundation as their inspiration in recording the plan of salvation. But even if it were true, as many ignorantly suppose, that Paul, in his seventh chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, guards against the idea of his inspiration in the cases there referred to, then every thing is to be taken as inspired, when he gives no such intimation; and consequently his message about the cloak and parchments, and his medical advice to Timothy, would have their claim to inspiration fully authenticated, even in the view of those persons who pervert the meaning of that chapter.

Some who are satisfied as to the inspiration of all the other parts of the New Testament Scriptures, are doubtful concerning the inspiration of the three books

written by Mark and Luke, who were not Apostles. From early accounts concerning these disciples, it is reckoned by many that they were among the seventy whom Jesus sent out in Judea. We know for certain, that they respectively accompanied Peter and Paul in their journeys, and they are mentioned by these two Apostles with much regard. The Apostles not only received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, but by laying on their hands imparted these gifts to other disciples. When Peter went down to Samaria, he laid his hands on the disciples there, who then received the Holy Ghost. When Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome, he informed them that he longed to see them, that he might impart to them some spiritual gift. Paul had communicated a gift to Timothy, whom he employed, as he also did Titus, in directing the churches in his absence. "I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands." By means of these gifts, those who possessed them were enabled to speak in languages they had never learned, and some of them to speak, by "revelation," the mind of God. There can be no reason, then, to doubt, that to Mark and Luke, considering the circumstances on which they stood with the Apostles, the best miraculous gifts were also communicated. They were not Apostles, but they were prophets who received immediate revelations from the Spirit. Eph. iii. 5.

But the conclusive argument as to the inspiration and fitness of these two disciples to contribute the books they have furnished to the sacred volume, does not rest on any supposition, however good the grounds of it

may be, but on the fact, that the first churches, *under the immediate guidance and superintendence of the Apostles*, received these books on an equal footing with the other Scriptures. The nation of Israel was appointed by God himself to be the depositaries of the Old Testament Scriptures, which are stamped with the authority of Jesus Christ. In like manner, to that nation which constitutes the kingdom of heaven, the New Testament Scriptures were committed. To it they were addressed and delivered by the Apostles, whom Christ had commissioned to record his words, which these Scriptures contain. The inspiration, therefore, of this second portion of the Holy Scriptures, stands on the same footing with that of the first portion, and is equally stamped with his authority. We appeal to the canon of the Jews with respect to the Old Testament, and we have the same strong ground of confidence, when we receive from the first churches the Scriptures of the New Testament. As, therefore, the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles, were received by them without dispute, were read by them in their assemblies every Lord's day,^x and taken for the rule of their duty, as of equal authority with the other Scriptures, which we have already seen by quotations from the early Christian writers; so we conclude with certainty, that these books stand on the same footing in point of authority, in other words, of inspiration, with all the rest, and form a part of the words of Christ, by which we shall be judged at the last day.

It is often supposed that the historical parts of Scripture were written by men acquainted with the

The testimonies adduced by Mr. Kaldane do not warrant this assertion with regard to the Acts of the Apostles. The utmost that they authorize may be seen on pages 58 and 69.

facts that are recorded, under a divine *superintendence*, by which they were prevented from falling into any error. This opinion is evidently founded on very low and erroneous ideas of those portions of the Word of God, and of their use. It supposes that these histories are little more than the narrative of the facts they contain, in which we are not greatly concerned. But every fact they record is fraught with important instruction. This idea was so strongly impressed on the Jews, that they maintained that God had more care of the letters and syllables of the Law, than of the stars in heaven; and that upon each tittle of it, whole mountains of doctrine hung. Hence every individual letter of the Law was numbered by them, and notice was taken how often it occurred.

The historical parts of Scripture are both introductory to, and illustrative of, the plan of redemption. The general importance, in a religious point of view, of the great outline of the narrations of the Fall,—of the Flood,—of the calling of Abraham, and of the election of the people of Israel,—of their deliverance from Egypt, and their being put in possession of the promised land, must be universally acknowledged. But the whole of the minute detail, by which that outline is filled up, is likewise in the highest degree instructive, and ought to be perused with the most devout attention. The Bible history describes, in action and exhibition, the perfections of Jehovah, as fully as the proclamation in which he declares himself to be long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty. It delineates the deceitfulness and des-

perate wickedness of the human heart, as forcibly and distinctly as the annunciations of the prophets, when they “cry aloud and spare not.” In the narratives of Scripture, the dependent state, the perverseness, and the folly of man, and the secret motives by which he is actuated, as well as the power, the wisdom, the justice, and the goodness of God in his providential government, and above all in redemption, are vividly depicted. There is not a battle fought by the Israelites, nor a change in the administration of their government, the account of which is not designed for our instruction. There is not an incident recorded as taking place in a private family, that has not a significant meaning.

In the Scriptures there are many things which, considered only in themselves, appear to be of no value, or, at least, of very little importance; but in reality the Bible contains nothing superfluous—nothing which does not contribute to its perfection, and to the evidence of its divine origin. Besides the lists of names in genealogies, we observe many other things in the Word of God, the knowledge of which seems to be of no use; yet their importance might be proved by numerous examples. We find in the Old Testament several regulations and narrations, which in appearance contribute neither to the strengthening of faith, nor to instruction or consolation. In the books of Moses, matters of the greatest importance are often only touched upon in a few words, while, on the contrary, many things that seem inconsiderable, are dwelt upon at great length. The redemption by the Messiah, which God promised to man

immediately after his fall—the calling of the Gentiles predicted to Abraham—the priesthood of Melchisedek, the most illustrious figure of Christ, and many other points of important doctrine, are only noted in a very summary manner. On the other hand, the nativity of Ishmael, the marriage of Isaac, and similar histories, are amply detailed, even in the most minute particulars, but all of them are full of instruction.

The single account of Hagar and Ishmael, as interpreted by the Apostle Paul, even to the most inconsiderable circumstance, shows us how we ought to judge of other histories of the Old Testament, although we do not perceive their object.† If Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman, and if the former was cast out of the family; these are the two covenants, the one superseding the other. In that important part of holy writ, the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul unfolds “the deep things of God, which God had revealed to him by his Spirit.” How much instruction does he there deduce from the historical fact that Isaac had two sons, born of the same mother, and at the same time, concerning whom it was said, “the elder shall serve the younger;” which contains a practical exhibition of the great and fundamental doctrines of the PRESCIENCE, the PROVIDENCE, and the SOVEREIGNTY of God, of his PREDESTINATION, ELECTION, and REPROBATION.

Various particulars, apparently of little consequence, which the Scriptures relate at great length, prove in what way effects the most wonderful have proceeded from causes in themselves inconsiderable; for in-

x 2 very ju-
inference

stance, the birthright of Jacob. God is pleased to teach great things, by things that are small. The prohibitions to take the dam with its young ones in the nest, and not to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, extend farther than at first appears. The act of Jesus Christ in stretching out his hand to touch the leper, does not appear of any account, except to those who know the law which declares that it occasioned uncleanness. The same law forbade the High Priest, who represented Jesus Christ, to enter any house in which there was a dead body. Notwithstanding this, the Lord even touched a bier. In all these particulars, there is a fulness of important doctrine.

Each passage in Scripture has its particular end in view, as the signification of the burning bush, and of the animals described in Ezekiel's vision. The Revelation of John does not present Jesus Christ to all the churches under the same figure. To one it presents the stars and the golden candlesticks. To another, it exhibits the two-edged sword. To another, the eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like fine brass. His titles are according to the diversity of the subjects. Many know, in general, that the ordinances of the ceremonial law prefigured Christ, but are ignorant how, and in what character, each of them represent him. There are none of them which have not an end and particular reason. There are many who, not being acquainted with what the Scripture has in view, are astonished at the recital of different enormities which it particularizes so carefully. The incest of Judah with the wife of his son, (which Moses,

as has been observed, had he been simply “superintended” or “elevated,” when he wrote, would never have introduced,) might seem as if it should rather have been buried with him, than inserted in the Sacred History, with so many shameful circumstances. Yet if the arrogance of the Jews is considered, who glory in their extraction, and who even found their election as a nation and covenant upon the virtues of their ancestors, we shall see that their errors could not be better refuted, nor their pride more effectually humbled, than by holding up to their view the deeply culpable conduct of their progenitor. The sins of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, being recorded, was calculated to warn Israel not to seek salvation by the works of the law. The omission of the Genealogy of Melchisedek, of his birth, and of his death, denoting the eternity of Jesus Christ, proves how much even the silence of the Scripture is instructive. Every distinct fact recorded in Scripture history may be truly considered an article of faith; for in the plan of Salvation, matters of fact are become doctrines, and doctrines are in the nature of matters of fact. That Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, suffered, and rose again, are all at the same time matters of fact and doctrines. Every fact points to that great event upon which the salvation of man depends—the coming of the Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, to redeem a peculiar people to himself—or in some way illustrates his salvation. ✕

In the tenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, this matter, as it respects the histories of the Old Testament, is placed beyond all doubt. Af-

All this from page 121 may be, and doubtless much of it is very true. It is a work written expressly in defence of "Plenary Inspiration," and might surely to give some clue by which we may arrive at the knowledge of those things here said to be contained in

ter referring to the recorded history of Israel, concerning their passage through the Red Sea, and the manner in which they were conducted in the wilderness, the Apostle adds, "*Now all these things happened to them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*" Here the purpose and value of the historical parts of Scripture are demonstrated. They are intended for the admonition of the people of God. "*Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*"* Rom. xv. 4. In this passage it is expressly affirmed, that every part of the Old Testament Scriptures was written for the use and edification of believers. Where, then, is there a place for the impious sentiment which some have ventured to promulgate—so derogatory to every idea that we ought to entertain of the oracles of God—so diametrically opposed to all they inculcate respecting their own divine origin and inspiration—that they contain certain things that are "not of a religious nature," and that "no inspiration was necessary concerning them?" In opposition to such daring and profane theories, Paul, the commissioned and accredited ambassador of Jesus Christ, affirms that "*ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*" The above comprehensive declarations include the historical as well as the prophetic and doctrinal parts of the Sacred Oracles, in short, the whole of them. The object, there-

his is no absolute proof that every book in the Bible is fully inspired. Many works may teach us patience, and give us comfort that are not at all so.

fore, of the historical records in the Scriptures, is essentially different from that of all other histories. They are not given to preserve the memory of certain occurrences, in order to promote the knowledge of what may be useful in regard to the affairs of this world, and to extend the sphere of human intelligence and experience; but exclusively to teach the knowledge of God and salvation. Scripture history is conducted in such a manner, that, like the doctrinal parts of the Bible, it is foolishness to the men of the world. It not only disappoints them in the nature of the facts which it relates, but also in the manner in which they are exhibited. Owing to the truth and impartiality of its narrations, the character of the people of Israel appears to them greatly worse than that of the grossest idolaters, and the accounts given in Scripture of men whose conduct on the whole stands approved by God, seems to them to sink below that standard of moral rectitude, to which they imagine that they themselves, and many of those who make no pretensions to religion, have attained. It not only records truth, without the smallest mixture of error, but also invariably keeps in view the agency of God in every occurrence,—in events the most minute, as well as the most considerable; and thus it furnishes a perpetual comment on the sublime description of the Apostle, when, penetrated with admiration of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, he exclaims, “Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

When the typical import of so many of the sacred narrations, concerning persons, places, institutions, and

events, with their necessary bearings, in subserviency to the ushering in of the Messiah, are duly attended to, all may be convinced, that for selecting and relating these histories, in which nothing was to be deficient, and nothing redundant, and for placing before us these mystic pictures for our instruction, the most plenary inspiration, the most accurate divine dictation, was indispensable. The prophets, and even the angels, had but a partial understanding of the things that were afterwards to take place. Moses, it is evident, was not aware, that, as being a type of Christ, it was necessary that his death should intervene, before the people of Israel should be led into the promised land.

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{ We have no reason to believe that he understood the import of all he wrote;—for instance, that when he recorded the history of Sarah and Hagar, he knew the design for which it was recorded, and the use that was afterwards to be made of it. We cannot doubt that the prayer of David, “*Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law,*” was equally suitable for Moses, who wrote that law. It was *the Lord* who made the statutes, and judgments, and laws, between him and the children of Israel, *by the hand of Moses*.—Lev. xxvi. 46.

Had the wisest and best informed of the Scripture historians not been inspired of God, but simply superintended, so as to prevent them from falling into error, the histories recorded by them would have been very unlike those which they have actually transmitted. Many of their narrations that exist would never have appeared, and others of them would have been very differently modified. We might have dis-

covered in them the self-approving wisdom of man, but not the seeming "foolishness of God." Would the united sagacity of all the wise men in the world have led them to relate the history of the creation of the universe in one chapter of a book, as Moses has done, and of the erection of the tabernacle in thirteen? * Would the fond prejudices of the Jewish nation, or the general desire fostered by so many of the learned, to support what is called the dignity of human nature, in both which Moses no doubt participated, have permitted him to record so base an action as the selling of their brother Joseph as a slave by the Jewish patriarchs,—the incest of Judah, whose tribe was to be always pre-eminent,—and the treach-

How inconsistent the idea that who should prevent them from error, should the same in suffer them to exhibit their own "self-approving wisdom."

* If we compare the first chapter of Genesis with the last sixteen of Exodus, excepting the 32d and the two following, we shall find a great difference between Moses' describing the construction of the universe and that of the tabernacle. In the one, he is very general and succinct; in the other, he is very copious, and marks the smallest peculiarities. The description of the great edifice of the world seemed truly to require more words than that of a small tent. But, on the contrary, the Spirit of God having presented a short representation of the whole mass of the world, details at great length the structure of the tabernacle. The world was solely constructed for the Church, in order that in it God should be served, and by it his glory manifested; Eph. iii. 10. The tabernacle was, in one view, a figure of the Church. God, thus purposing to show that his church, in which he was to be served, was more precious to him and more important than all the rest of the world, has spoken of the tabernacle more amply and more particularly, than of all the elements and all the universe together.

ery and revenge of Levi, from whom was to descend the whole priesthood of Israel?

That there was a higher hand which directed the pens of Moses, and of the other writers of sacred history, may be sufficiently manifest to all who have seen in what that history has issued. There is, besides, a combination and a harmony in the historical parts, both of the Old and New Testaments, which we have sufficient ground to believe in a great measure escaped the notice of the writers, as has also been the case with thousands of those who have read them—a variety and a unity which irresistibly prove that *One* only—He who knows the end from the beginning—is the author of the whole who employed various individuals to produce a uniform work, of which none of them either comprehended all that he contributed to it, or knew for what reason he was directed to record one thing,* and to omit another.

Considering the purpose which the historical parts of the Scriptures were intended to serve, in exhibiting the character and power of God, and his uninterrupted agency in the government of the world, and in pointing to Him who is the end of the law,

* A remarkable instance of this occurs in the repetition of the tenth commandment in the book of Deuteronomy. The Romanists are in the habit of striking out the second commandment, which condemns their idolatry, and to preserve the appearance of integrity for the decalogue, they divide the tenth commandment into two. The transposition of this commandment in the book of Deuteronomy, for which at first sight no reason can be assigned, completely stultifies and exposes their artifice.

we have sufficient reason to be convinced, that neither Moses, nor the other sacred historians, nor all the angels in heaven, though acquainted with all the facts, and under the direction, and with the aid, both of superintendence and elevation, were competent to write the historical parts of the Word of God. They neither possessed foresight nor wisdom sufficient for the work. In both respects, every creature is limited. Into these things, the angels, so far from being qualified to select and endite them, "desire to look," and, from the contemplation of them, derive more knowledge of God than they before possessed, and have their joy even in heaven increased. In those histories, the thoughts and secret motives of men are often unfolded and referred to. Was any one but the Searcher of Hearts competent to this? Could angels have revealed them, unless distinctly made known to them? If it be replied, that in such places the sacred writers enjoyed the inspiration of suggestion, that is, of verbal dictation, we ask, where is the distinction to be found? It is a distinction unknown to the Scriptures. And so far from a plenary inspiration not being necessary in its historical parts, there is not any portion of the sacred volume in which it is more indispensable. But even admitting that verbal inspiration was not in our view essential in those parts of the book of God, is this a reason why we should not receive the testimony of the sacred writers, who nowhere give the most distant hint that they are written under a different kind or degree of inspiration from the rest of it; but who, in the

most unqualified manner, assert that full inspiration belongs to the whole of the Scriptures?

The very words that are used in the prophetic parts of Scripture, must *necessarily* have been communicated to the prophets. They did not always comprehend the meaning of their own predictions, into which they "searched diligently." And in this

case, it was impossible that, unless the words had been dictated to them, they could have written intelligibly. Although they had written the Scriptures, it was necessary to show them "that which is noted in the Scripture of truth," Dan. x. 21. The writings of the prophets constitute a great portion of the Old Testament Scriptures, and God claims it as his sole prerogative, to know the things that are to come.

We are therefore certain that *they* enjoyed *verbal* inspiration; and, as we have not any where a hint of different kinds of inspiration by which the Scriptures are written, does it not discover the most presumptuous arrogance to assert that there are different kinds? *

The nature of the mission of the prophets required the full inspiration which they affirm that they possessed. God never intrusted such a work as they had to perform to any man, nor any part of such a work.

It was God himself, "who, at sundry times, and in diverse manners, spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets." That work, through which was to be

made known "to principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ

Jesus," was not a work to be intrusted to any creature. The prophet Micah, iii. 8, says, "*But truly I*

and "presumptuous arrogance" no more follows necessarily the supposed assertion, than the assertion "There are no inspired books" would necessarily follow the admission that there is not an inspired catalogue of the

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W.H. in a very
excellent para-
graph in page 100
says "It will be pro-
per to consider it
(inspiration) solely
in the light which
the Word of God af-
fords". If he means
careful inquiry
by comparing scrip-
ture with scripture
he is right; but if
he means that we
are to take nothing
but express declar-
ations he will
find that he must
give up some
things which he
holds in his Chris-
tian profession.
Female commun-
ion for instance
and infant bap-
tism - The above
question is ground
ed on a negative,

am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." It was not the prophets then who spoke, but the Spirit of God who spoke by them.

Of the complete direction necessary for such a service as was committed to him, both of lawgiver and prophet, Moses was aware, when the Lord commanded him to go to Pharaoh, and to lead forth the children of Israel from Egypt. In that work he intreated that he might not be employed. This proved the proper sense he entertained of his own unfitness for it. But it was highly sinful, and evinced great weakness of faith, thus to hesitate, after the Lord had informed him that he would be "with him." Moses was accordingly reproved for this, but the ground of his plea was admitted; and full inspiration, not only as to the subject of his mission, but as to the very words he was to employ, was promised. In answer to his objection, the Lord said unto him, *Exod. iv. 11, 12, "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."* Moses still urged his objection, and the same reply was in substance repeated, both in regard to himself and to Aaron. The full inspiration, then, which was at first promised to Moses in general terms, was, for his encouragement, made known in this particular manner, and the promise was distinctly fulfilled. Accordingly, when, as the lawgiver of Israel, he afterwards addressed the people, he was warranted to preface what

he enjoined upon them with, "*Thus saith the Lord,*" or, "*These are the words which the Lord hath commanded, that ye should do them.*" In observing all the commandments that Moses commanded them, and in remembering the way by which the Lord had led them, Israel was to learn, that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that *proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.*" Signs were shown to Moses, and God came unto him in a thick cloud, in order, as he said, "*that the people may hear thee when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever,*" Exod. xix. 9.

If the words of Moses had not been the words of God,—had he not been conscious of the full verbal inspiration by which he wrote, would the following language have been suitable to him, or would he have ventured to use it? Deuteronomy, iv. 2: "*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep these commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.*" Deut. vi. 6: "*And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,*" &c. Deut. xi. 18: "*Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your head, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates.*" From these

passages, we learn that Moses was conscious that all the words which he spoke to the people were the words of God. He knew that it was with him as with Balaam, to whom the Lord said, Numbers, xxii. 35, 38, “ *Only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak ;*” and in the language of Balaam, Moses could answer, “ *The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.*”

As “the word of the Lord” was communicated to Moses, so it also came to Gad, to Nathan, and to the other prophets, who were men of God, and in whose mouths was the word of God. “ *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth,*” 1 Kings, xvii. 24. The manner in which the prophets delivered their messages, proves that they considered the words which they wrote, not as their own words, but dictated to them by God himself. Elija said to Ahab, “ *Behold I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity.*” On this, Mr Scott, in his Commentary, observes, “ Elija was the voice, the Lord was the speaker, whose words these were.” This is a just account of all the messages of the prophets. They introduce them with, “ *Thus saith the Lord,*” and declare them to be “ *the word of the Lord ;*” and is it possible that the prophets could have more explicitly affirmed, that the words which they uttered were communicated to them, and that they were only the instruments of this communication to those whom they addressed? In the place where we read, “ Now these be the last words of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel,” David says, “ *The Spirit of the*

Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue," 2 Samuel, xxiii. 2. In like manner it is said, "*And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the Lord,"* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 1, 2. "*Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in the prophets,"* Nehemiah, ix. 30. Isaiah commences his prophecies by summoning the heavens and the earth to hear, "*for the Lord hath spoken,"* Isa. i. 2. In the same manner, Jeremiah writes, "*The words of Jeremiah, to whom the word of the Lord came.*" "*Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*" "*I will make my words in thy mouth fire.*" Jeremiah, i. 1, 2; 9; v. 14. "*Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book,"* Jeremiah, xxx. 2. Again, in the prophecies of Ezekiel, "*Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak my words unto them.*" "*Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee, receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears, and go get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God.*" Ezekiel, iii. 4, 10. Hosea says, "*The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea;*" "*The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea.*" i. 1, 2. It is in similar language that the other prophets generally introduce their predictions, which are everywhere interspersed with, "*thus saith the Lord.*"

All, then, that was spoken by the prophets in these several recorded passages, was spoken *in the name of the Lord*; and “no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.” When false prophets appeared, it was necessary for them to profess to speak in the name of the Lord, and to steal his *words* from their neighbour. “*I have heard what the prophets say, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.*” Jeremiah, xxiii. 25–31. They were the *words* of God, therefore, which the false prophets stole from the true prophets of Jehovah.

The uniform language of Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, respecting the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, proves that, without exception, they are “*the Word of God.*” On what principle but that of the verbal inspiration of Scripture, can we explain our Lord’s words, John, x. 35, “*The Scripture cannot be broken?*” Here the argument is founded on one word, “*gods,*” which without verbal inspiration might not have been used; and if used improperly, might have led to idolatry. In proof of the folly of their charge of blasphemy, he refers the Jews to where it is written in their law, “*I said ye are Gods.*” The

reply to this argument was obvious :—The Psalmist, they might answer, uses the word in a sense that is not proper. But Jesus precluded this observation, by affirming, that “ the Scripture cannot be broken,” that is, not a word of it can be altered, because it is the Word of Him with whom there is no variableness. Could this be said if the choice of words had been left to men? Here, then, we find our Lord laying down a principle, which for ever sets the question at rest. The Apostles, in like manner, reason from the use of a particular word. Of this we have an example, Hebrews, ii. 8, where the interpretation of the passage referred to depends on the word “ *all*.” Again, Galatians, iii. 16, a most important conclusion is drawn from the use of the word “ *seed*,” in the singular, and not in the plural number. A similar instance occurs, Hebrews, xii. 27, in the expression “ once more,” quoted from the prophet Haggai.

When the Pharisees came to Jesus, and desired an answer respecting divorce, he replied, “ Have ye not read, that *he which made them* at the beginning, made them a male and female? *and said*, for this cause,” &c. Thus, what is said in the history, either by Adam or Moses, at the formation of Eve, is appealed to as having the authority of a law. Adam was not a legislator, and nothing that Moses could say, unless dictated by God, could have the force of a law, to be quoted by our Lord. But what was then uttered by man, was the word of God himself.

The Lord Jesus Christ constantly refers to the whole of the Old Testament, as being, in the most minute particulars, of infallible authority. He speaks of the

necessity of every word of the Law and the Prophets being fulfilled. "Till heaven and earth pass, *one jot or one tittle* shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled."—"It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than *one tittle* of the law to fail."—"The Scriptures," he says, "must be fulfilled." In numerous passages the Lord refers to what is "*written*" in the Scriptures, as of equal authority with his own declarations; and, therefore, the words which they contain must be the words of God. *

The Apostles use similar language in their many references to the Old Testament Scriptures, which they quote as of decisive authority, and speak of them in the same way as they do of their own writings. "*That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour,*" 2 Peter, iii. 2. Paul says to Timothy, "*From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus,*" 2 Tim. iii. 15. In this way he proves the importance of the old Testament Scriptures, and the connexion between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations. The Apostles call the Scriptures "*the oracles of God,*" Rom. iii. 2. What God says is ascribed by them to the Scriptures: "*The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee.*"—"For what saith the Scripture?—*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*"—"What saith the Scriptures?—*cast out the bond-woman, and her son.*" So much is

* It is, however, very remarkable that our Lord never once quotes from, nor refers to any of the books of the Ragiographa, nor do the Jews in their contentious with him. There is not a single text from, or reference to, those books in the Evangelists or the Revelations. This I aver from my own careful examination.
J. K. B.

the Word of God identified with himself, that the Scripture is represented as possessing and exercising the peculiar prerogatives of God: "*The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen ;*"— "*The Scripture hath concluded all under sin.*"

From the following passages, among others that might be adduced, we learn the true nature of that inspiration which is ascribed to the Old Testament by the writers of the New: Matth. i. 22, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was *spoken of the Lord* by the Prophet." Matth. ii. 15, "And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was *spoken of the Lord* by the Prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." Matth. xxii. 43, "He saith unto them, How then doth David, *in spirit*, call him Lord?" Mark xii. 36, "For David himself said *by the Holy Ghost*." Luke, i. 70, "As he *spake* by the mouth of his Holy Prophets, which have been since the world began." Acts, i. 16, "Which the *Holy Ghost spoke* by the mouth of David." Acts, xiii. 35. "*He* (God) saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." These words are here quoted as the words of God, although addressed to himself. In the parallel passage, Acts, ii. 31, the same words are ascribed to David, by whose "mouth" therefore God spoke. Acts, xxviii. 25, "And when they agreed not among themselves they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word: Well *spake the Holy Ghost* by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers." Rom. i. 2, "Which *He* had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures." Rom. ix. 25, "As

He saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her Beloved, which was not beloved." 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17, "What! know ye not, that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, *saith He*, shall be one flesh." Here the words of Adam or of Moses are referred to by the Apostle, as they had been by Jesus Christ himself, as the words of God. Eph. iv. 8, "Wherefore *He saith*, when he ascended up on high." Heb. i. 7, 8, "And of the angels *He saith*;"—"But unto the Son *He saith*." In these passages what was said by the psalmist, is quoted as said by God. Heb. iii. 7, "Wherefore, as *the Holy Ghost saith*, To-day if ye will hear his voice." Heb. x. 15, "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a *witness* to us, for after that *He had said*." 1 Peter, i. 11, "Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when *it testified* beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 2 Peter, i. 20, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, for the prophecy came not in old time (at any time) by the will of man, but holy men of God *spake as they were moved* by the Holy Ghost." And how was it possible that they could find language in which to express the mysteries of God which they so imperfectly comprehended, unless the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, had dictated every word they uttered, Acts, iv. 25, "*Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said*, Why did the Heathen rage?" Heb. i. 1, "God, who at sundry times, and in diverse manners, *spake* in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last

days *spoken* unto us by his Son." The words, then, spoken by the Prophets, were as much the *words of God*, as the words which were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And on various occasions Jesus declares, that the words which he spoke were the *words of him* that sent him. John, viii. 26, 28, "I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him;" —"As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." John, xii. 49, 50, "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak;" —"Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." John, xiv. 10, "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself." John, xvii. 8, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." John, xvii. 14, "I have given them thy word." And this was in strict conformity with what God had declared by Moses, concerning the divine mission of his Son. Deut. xviii. 18, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and *will put my words in his mouth*; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto *my words which he shall speak in my name*, I will require it of him."—"He hath made *my mouth*," saith the Redeemer, "like a sharp sword," Isaiah, xlix. 2. "And out of *his mouth* went a sharp two-edged sword," Rev. i. 16. And again, God saith to the Messiah, "I have put *my words* in thy mouth," Isaiah, li. 16. "And *my words*, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth," Isaiah, lix. 21. The words, then, of which the whole of the

Scriptures are composed, are the words *dictated* by God, and *written* by men. Sometimes they are quoted as the words of God, and sometimes as the words of the writers, which proves that in fact they are both. Those who deny that, in any case, the words used by the penmen of Scripture are the words of God, expressly contradict the assertion of the Apostle, that *All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and also disregard the direct testimony of all those passages which have been quoted above, as well as of a multitude of others to the same effect, that are contained in the Scriptures.

The perfect inspiration which belongs to the *Apostles* may be learned from the nature of that SERVICE to which they were appointed, from the PROMISES which were given to them for the discharge of it, and also from their own DECLARATIONS, the truth of which is attested, not only by the nature of their doctrine, but by the miracles that they wrought.

The commission of the Lord to his Apostles, when he sent them forth in the SERVICE to which he appointed them, was given in these words: Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, “ *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” Here we see, that the commission of the Apostles included the promulgation of the whole doctrine, and of every regulation of the kingdom of God; that it extended to all the world; and that a promise was annexed to it, that

the Lord himself would be present with them to the end of time, maintaining and giving efficacy to their testimony, which is recorded in the Scriptures.

This commission is exactly conformable to all that Jesus Christ had at different times said to the Apostles. To Peter, at one time, he declared, Matt. xvi. 19, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Afterwards, he repeated this to all the Apostles, Matt. xviii. 18, "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." To the same purpose, when he had breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," John, xx. 22, he added, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." In these respects, the Apostles were constituted the authoritative ambassadors of the Lord, and were appointed to an office in which they can have no successors. The laws which, under that authority, they were to establish, and the doctrine they were to promulgate, by which eternal life is conveyed to men, and which is therefore characterised as the keys of the kingdom of heaven, were to be of perpetual and universal obligation. John, xii. 48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words," says Jesus, "hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken," (which he had spoken, or was to speak by his Apostles,) "the same shall judge him in the last day." In another place, to the same pur-

pose, when speaking of the Apostles having followed him, he says to them, Matt. xix. 28, "In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The word that the Apostles were to declare, was to open and to shut, and to bind and to loose, in heaven and in earth. It was his own word, the word of God, to be uttered by them, by which he would at last judge the world. "For," says he, "he that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me," Matt. x. 40; which is to the same effect as when he says to the seventy disciples whom he sent out, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me," Luke, x. 16. From the awful importance, then, of the service committed to the Apostles, we may judge what kind of inspiration was necessary for those whose words were to be the words of the judge of all. "We are unto God," say they, "a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life: and who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Cor. ii. 15. The commission of the Apostles embraces every circumstance by which the divine glory is manifested to every order of intelligent beings—the whole of that revelation of mercy by which the manifold wisdom of God is to be made known to principalities and powers in heavenly places, as well as a complete system of the

will of God to mankind. Can it be supposed, then, that the heralds of this salvation did not receive a plenary inspiration to qualify them for such a service? That a prophet should be left to the choice of his own words, and be a prophet from God, or that an Apostle should be commissioned to promulgate the laws of the kingdom of Christ, which are everlastingly to bind in heaven and in earth, and yet be permitted to choose for himself the words and language in which these laws should be delivered, is altogether incredible and absurd. If the words or language are of man's choosing, the Bible becomes partly the book of man and partly the book of God.

The nature of this inspiration, we are also taught by the PROMISES that were given to the Apostles respecting it. When Jesus Christ first sent out his Apostles to proclaim to the house of Israel that his kingdom was at hand, he warned them of the reception they were to meet with, and that they should be brought before governors and kings for his sake. At the same time they were forbid to use the means which would have been necessary, if in any measure they had been left to their own judgment. He commanded them to rely entirely upon him, and promised them that inspiration which, in such situations, would be necessary for them: Matt. x. 19, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak: For it is *not ye that speak*, but the Spirit of your Father *which speaketh in you*." Mark, xiii. 11, "But when they shall lead you and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand

what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; *for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.*"^x In the parallel passage, Luke, xii. 12, "For the *Holy Ghost shall teach you* in the same hour *what ye ought to say.*" And again, Luke, xxi. 15, "I will give you a *mouth*, and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." Language cannot more plainly declare, that the *words* they were to utter, were to be given by inspiration to the Apostles. It was the Holy Spirit who was to speak by them, just as "*God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*"^z Acts, iii. 21 ; Luke, i. 70.

If this inspiration was necessary for the Apostles in particular passing circumstances, when they were brought before judges and magistrates ; and if, in such occasional situations, as on the day of Pentecost, they actually possessed it, how much more necessary must it have been when they were employed in recording the permanent laws of the kingdom of Christ ! It must therefore be included in the declarations made by our Lord, in what he says in his last discourse, respecting the Comforter whom he was to send. And that these declarations did refer to the same inspiration, we are not left to conjecture ; for we hear the Apostle Paul, when afterwards he addresses a Christian church, asserting that *Christ spake in him*, 2 Cor. xiii. 3. When about to leave his disciples, Jesus says to them, John, xiv. 26, "*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring*

all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Apostles were not to trust to their memories, to repeat what Jesus had said to them ; but *all* that he had *said* was to be dictated to them by the Holy Ghost. And again, John, xiv. 13, " When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will *guide you into all truth* ; for he shall not speak of himself, but *whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak*, and he will show you things to come." After his resurrection, Jesus Christ said to them, John, xx. 21, " *Peace be unto you ; as my Father has sent me, even so send I you.*" His last words to them on earth were these, Acts, i. 8 : " *But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*" Such were the PROMISES given to the Apostles of what they were to receive, to fit them for that great work in which they were going to engage. We shall now hear their DECLARATIONS in respect to the fulfilment of them.

On the day of Pentecost, Acts, ii. 4, " *They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*" On that occasion, when speaking in unknown tongues, as was the case with others of the brethren in the Churches, 1 Cor. xiv. 13, 28, they must have been inspired with every word they spoke, as is asserted in the declaration, that " the Spirit gave them *utterance.*" When, afterwards, having been brought before the Jewish rulers, they had returned to their own company and prayed, Acts, iv. 31, " The place

was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the *word of God* with boldness." Paul begins his Epistles by designating himself an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Thus he declares his Apostolic character and commission from the Lord, by whom he was qualified for his work. We see with what authority he afterwards expresses himself: "Now unto him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began; but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."

—"Though we," says the same Apostle, Galatians, i. 8, "or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."—"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."—"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."—"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," 1 Cor. ii.

13. Here, in making a general declaration of what he taught, both the *matter* and the *words* are declared to be from God.* Again he says, 1 Cor. ii.

* On this verse Macknight has the following note:—
 “*Words taught by the Holy Spirit.*—From this we learn that as often as the Apostles declared the doctrines of the gospel, the Spirit presented these doctrines to their minds clothed in their own language; which, indeed, is the only way in which the doctrines of the gospel could be presented to their minds. For men are so accustomed to connect ideas with words, that they always think in words. Wherefore, though the language in which the Apostles delivered the doctrines of the gospel, were really suggested to them by the Spirit, it was properly their own style of language. This language in which the doctrines of the gospel was revealed to the Apostles, and in which they delivered these doctrines to the world, is what St Paul calls *the form of sound words*, which Timothy had heard from him, and was to hold fast, 2 Tim. i. 13. Every one, therefore, ought to beware of altering or wresting the inspired language of Scripture, in their expositions of the articles of the Christian faith. Taylor, in the sixth chapter of his key, at the end, explains the verse under consideration thus:—*Which things we speak, not in philosophical terms of human invention, but which the Spirit teacheth in the writings of the Old Testament*: and contends, that the Apostle’s meaning is, that he expressed the Christian privileges in the very same words and phrases, by which the Spirit expressed the privileges of the Jewish church in the writings of the Old Testament. But if the Spirit suggested these words and phrases to the Jewish prophets, why might he not suggest to the Apostles the words and phrases in which they communicated the gospel revelation to the world? Especially as there are many discoveries in the gospel which could not be expressed clearly, if at all, in the words by which the prophets expressed the privilege of the Jewish church. Besides,

15, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ." 1 Cor. ii. 7, "We speak the wisdom of God." Eph. iii. 4, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit." 2 Cor. ii. 10, "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also; for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ." 2 Cor. xiii. 2, 3, "If I come again I will not spare, since you seek a proof of *Christ speaking in me*." In 1 Cor. vii. 17, where some have rashly and ignorantly asserted, that the Apostle concludes with expressing a doubt whether he was inspired or not, he says, "so ordain I in all churches." Such language, which is precisely similar to that of Moses, Deut. vi. 6, would have been most presumptuous, unless he could have added, as he does a little afterwards, 1 Cor. xiv. 36, "What! came *the word of God* out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the *things that I write* unto you are the *commandments of the Lord*." At the opening of the same epistle Paul had said, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words

it is evident, that when the Apostles introduce into their writings the words and phrases of the Jewish prophets, they explain them in other words and phrases, which, no doubt, were suggested to them by the Spirit."

of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."—"We speak the wisdom of God." Could any man have used such language unless he had been conscious that he was speaking the words of God? 1 Thess. ii. 13, "For this cause also thank we God, without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) *the word of God*." 1 Thess. iv. 8, "He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not *man* but *God*, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." 1 Pet. i. 12, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." 1 Pet. i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Pet. i. 25, "The *word of the Lord* endureth for ever. And *this is the word* which by the Gospel is preached unto you." In referring to the instruction which they gave to the churches, the Apostles characterise it as their "commandment," and refer to it as equivalent to the authority of the Holy Ghost, as in fact it was the same. Acts, xv. 24, 28, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." Such is the inspiration by which all the penmen of the Scriptures wrote, and God has annexed the most solemn prohibitions against any attempt to add to, or to take from, or to corrupt, his Word. These warnings are interspersed through every

part of the sacred volume ; and each one of them is equally applicable to the whole of it.

In this manner, that portion of the Scriptures called the *Law* is guarded :—“ *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it,*” Deut. iv. 2 ; xii. 32.

In the next division, sometimes called the *Hagiographa*, it is written, “ *Every word of God is pure : He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar,*” Prov. xxx. 16. The last part of this threatening is infinitely more terrible than the first ; for transgressors may be reproved, and yet find mercy, but “all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death,” Rev. xxi. 8.

In the prophetical writings, a similar warning is again repeated. They are closed with an intimation, that no more prophets were to be sent, till the forerunner of Jehovah, who was to come suddenly to his temple, should appear. Israel is then commanded to regard that revelation which had been made to Moses, concerning Jesus, which the prophets had been commissioned to illustrate, but not to alter ; “ *Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments,*” Mal. iv. 4.

As, at the conclusion of the Old Testament, where the attention of the people of Israel is called to the first appearance of the Son of God, the Saviour, they are instructed that the prophetic testimony to him is finished ; so, at the conclusion of the New Testament,

where the attention of all men is directed to his second coming, as the final Judge, the canon of Scripture is closed, and a solemn and most awful warning is given, neither to add to it, nor to take from it: "*I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book,*" Rev. xxii. 18, 19. This passage, so similar to the others above cited, is, for the same reasons for which it is applicable to the book of Revelation, applicable to the whole inspired volume.

In the references that have been made above to many passages of Scripture, to which more of a similar import might have been added, the complete verbal inspiration by which both Prophets and Apostles spoke and wrote, has, by their own DECLARATIONS, been unanswerably established. Whatever they recorded, they recorded by the Spirit of God. Whether they spoke in their own tongue, or in tongues which they had not learned; or whether they uttered prophecies which they understood, or concerning which they acknowledged, "I heard, but I understood not;" still they spoke or wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And if we have seen that even the Divine Redeemer himself, *who is over all, God blessed for ever*, when acting as the Father's servant in his mediatorial character, *spoke*, as he declares, not of himself, but the *words* of Him that sent

him ; and that *God the Holy Ghost*, in his office of Comforter, was not to speak of himself, but to *speake* whatsoever he should *hear* ; is it to be presumed that Prophets and Apostles should ever have been left to choose the *words* which they have recorded in the Scriptures ? *

The words, then, which the Prophets and Apostles recorded, were the *words of God*,—*Christ spake in them*,—they were *the words which the Holy Ghost taught*. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, Eph. vi. 17. “It is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,” Heb. iv. 12. This *word* was put into the mouths of the Prophets and Apostles ; and therefore their words and commandments have all the authority of the words and commandments of God. “*I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour*,” 2 Pet. iii. 1, 2. The term inspiration loses its meaning when an attempt is made to divide it between God and man. In what an endless perplexity would any man be involved, who was called upon to give to each degree of inspiration, under which it has been supposed the Bible is written, that portion which belongs to it ! Let any one undertake the task, and he will soon find that he is building upon the sand. Yet such an attempt should have been made by those daring innovators, be they ancient or modern, who have represented the sacred volume as a motley performance,—part of it written under an inspiration of SUGGESTION or REVELATION,—part of it under an

* e.g. The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words"—
Eccles. 12-10

inspiration of DIRECTION,—part of it under an inspiration of ELEVATION,—part of it under an inspiration of SUPERINTENDENCE,—and part of it under no inspiration at all !

But why have such distinctions been introduced ? Do they diminish the difficulty of our conceiving how the inspiration of the Holy Ghost is communicated to those who are the subjects of it ? Is it easier to conceive that a meaning without words should be imparted to the mind of man, than that it should be conveyed to him in words ? Instead of being diminished, the difficulty is increased tenfold. But, in either case, we have nothing to do with difficulties ; it is a subject which we cannot comprehend ; and in whatever way the effect is produced, it is our duty to believe what the Holy Scriptures assert, and not to resort to those vain speculations on the subject, by which men darken council by words without knowledge. Every Christian should remember, that the view which he takes of the inspiration of the Scriptures, is to him of the greatest practical importance. With what a different feeling must that man read the Bible, who believes that it is a book which partly treats of “ common and civil affairs,” and partly of “ things religious,” which is partly the production of men, who were sometimes directed in one way, sometimes in another, and who sometimes were not directed at all, and partly the production of God, and that it contains certain things unworthy of being considered as a part of divine revelation,—from the feeling of the Christian, who reads that sacred book under the solemn conviction, that its

contents are *wholly* religious, and that every word of it is dictated by God ! In reading these words, Proverbs, iii. 2, “ *My son*, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction”—how differently must he be affected, who reads them as addressed to him merely by Solomon—from the man who views them as addressed to him by his heavenly Father, according to Hebrews, xii. 5 ! Paul, in that Epistle, in making various quotations from the Old Testament, refers to them expressly as the words of the Holy Ghost. As far as distinctions in inspiration are admitted, their tendency is to diminish our reverence for the Bible, and to exclude as much as possible the operation of the Spirit of God in its composition. In the same way men eagerly oppose the doctrine of a particular Providence, as one on which it is not “*prudent*” to insist, as not “*necessary*,” and as “*attended with difficulties*,” while they labour to exclude the agency of God from the government of the world, and from the direction of the course of events, by ascribing the whole to the operation of what are called “the laws of nature.”

Dr Doddridge, in his Essay on Inspiration, p. 58, after desiring the reader to observe, that in very few instances he has allowed an error in our present copies (of the Scriptures), and that, in these few instances, he has imputed it to translators—adds, “because, as *Mr Seed* very properly expresses it in his excellent *sermon* on this subject, (which, since I wrote the former part of this dissertation, fell into my hands,) a *partial inspiration* is, to all intents and purposes, *no inspiration at all* : For, as he justly

argues against the supposition of any *mixture of error* in these *sacred writings*, mankind would be as much embarrassed to know what was *inspired*, and what was *not*, as they could be to *collect a religion* for themselves; the consequence of which would be, that we are left *just where we were*, and that GOD put himself to a great expense of *miracles* to effect nothing at all; a consequence highly derogatory and injurious to his honour." It is not a little remarkable, that such sentiments should thus be approved of by one who, in the same work, has ascribed various degrees of inspiration to different parts of the Scriptures. Let this glaring inconsistency be considered by those who have followed Dr Doddridge in his unscriptural views on this subject.

It is allowed by Dr Doddridge, that under what is called the inspiration of *suggestion*, "the use of our faculties is superseded, and GOD does as it were *speak directly* to the mind; *making such discoveries to it*, as it could not otherwise have obtained, and *dictating the very words* in which these discoveries are to be communicated to others: so that a person, in what he writes from hence, is no other than first *the Auditor*, and then (if I may be allowed the expression) *the Secretary*, of GOD; as *John* was of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, when he wrote from his sacred lips *the seven Epistles* to the *Asiatic Churches*. And it is no doubt to an *inspiration of this kind* that the *Book of the Revelation* owes its original." (Doddridge on Inspiration, page 41.) Why, then, has Dr Doddridge supposed that any other part of the Bible was written under an

inspiration of a different kind? Where did he learn this? Was it less necessary that the Epistles which were written to the other churches, as "the commandments of the Lord," 1 Cor. xiv. 37, should be fully inspired, than for those addressed to the seven churches of Asia? or was it requisite that, to the Book of Revelation, a higher degree of inspiration should belong, than to the other books of the Holy Scriptures? And where, we are entitled to ask, do the Scriptures sanction such distinctions? But if they in no part give the smallest countenance to them, or to any thing similar, what right has any man to introduce them, and to teach what the Scriptures have not only not taught, but the contrary of which they have most explicitly taught? To invent distinctions that consider some parts of the Scriptures as half inspired, and others as not inspired at all, and relating to things merely civil, is most dishonourable and degrading to the Book of God, and deprives Christians of all that edification which such passages are calculated to afford. Such distinctions, let them be made by whom they may, are the offspring of presumption and folly.

On the whole, we see the nature of that inspiration by which the prophets and apostles wrote. The manner of communicating the revelations might differ, Numbers, xii. 6, 7, 8. They might be imparted in a vision, or in a dream, or by speaking mouth to mouth; but the result, as well as their certainty and authority, were the same. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God *spoke* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Neither

was it the Apostles who spoke, but the Spirit of their Father who *spoke* in them, or by them. Let no man, then, venture to introduce distinctions in that inspiration by which the word of God is written, unheard of in that word, and therefore totally unwarranted and unauthorized. It is not for men to say, "How can these things be?" No man comprehends himself either in soul or in body, nor can we tell how the one acts upon the other: And shall vain man, who "would be wise, though man be born like the wild ass's colt," stumble at, and reject, the declarations of God concerning that inspiration which belongs to his word, and by which he makes known his pleasure? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." The Lord is able to communicate his will in whatever way he pleases, although we cannot trace the manner of his operation. In the words spoken by the ass of Balaam, we have an example of this communication, through an unconscious and involuntary instrument.* In Balaam himself we have an example through one who was conscious, but involuntary, in the declaration he made respecting Israel. In Caiaphas, through one who was voluntary in what he said, but unconscious of its import. And in the writers of the Scriptures,

* Under which of the kinds of inspiration that have been so ingeniously forged, did the Ass of Balaam speak? Was it under that of *Elevation*? Or shall the truth of the fact be rejected altogether, because it is "attended with difficulties!?"

we have an example of agents both voluntary and conscious, but equally actuated by the Spirit of God.

The dictating of that Law which is perfect, every jot and tittle of which was to be fulfilled,—of those histories which were written for the “admonition” of all future generations,—of the institutions of that kingdom which is to endure for ever,—and of that word by which all shall be judged, was, and necessarily must have been, the work of perfect, that is, the work of infinite wisdom; Psalm xix. 7, “*The law of the Lord is perfect.*”—But if certain parts of it are the words of men, who wrote merely under a superintendence which preserved them from recording what is false, or erroneous, these parts must, like their authors, be imperfect. The same would hold true respecting all that is supposed to be written under an inspiration of elevation, which, whatever it may mean, could not be carried beyond that enlargement of which the mind of man is capable. The Bible can only be perfect, if it be the word of God himself from one end to the other. But, if the words of the writers of it be solely their own words, or be they the words of Angels, Principalities, or Powers, they are imperfect,—and the Bible is an imperfect book.

The perfection of the Scriptures is necessary, for the purpose they were intended to serve. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work,” Psalm xix. 1. “By the things that are made” God’s eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen, so as to render men “without excuse,” Rom. i. 20; and there they leave him under condemnation. But “*The Law of the Lord is per-*

fect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." It is not, then, by the works of creation,—it is not by his dealings towards either holy or fallen Angels, that the glory of God is fully displayed. This honour is reserved for the history of the incarnation of his Son. It is here, and here only, that mercy and truth meet together, that righteousness and peace embrace each other;—truth has sprung out of the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven. Here justice and judgment are seen to be the habitation of Jehovah's throne,—and mercy and truth to go before his face.

"Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it," Isaiah, xlv. 8. Here is something far more glorious than all that ever was seen before in the universe of God! It is a righteousness exalted to absolute perfection, and rendered infinitely glorious by the union of the divine with the human nature. God charged his Angels with folly, and the heavens are not clean in his sight, but with him who wrought this righteousness, he is "well pleased."

The righteousness of Adam in innocence, or the righteousness of angels in glory, was the righteousness of creatures, and therefore a limited righteousness. It consisted in the love and service of God, which they rendered with all their heart and strength;

but farther it could not go. Their righteousness was available in the time only while it continued to be performed, and it might cease and be lost. But that righteousness which the skies have poured down, is a righteousness that is infinite, and that shall never be abolished, Isaiah, li. 6, 8. It is a righteousness that was performed in a limited period of time, by Him who is "CALLED JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;" but the glory of it was contemplated from eternity, while its efficacy extends back to the fall of man, and forward through all the ages of eternity. It is the "*everlasting righteousness*," which the prophet Daniel predicted was to be brought in by the Messiah. It is "the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Peter, i. 1, the ministration of which was committed to the Apostles, 2 Cor. iii. 9. Through eternity it shall be the delight of the Father, the admiration of angels, and the song of the redeemed.

It is in the Bible that this righteousness is made known. In the Bible the Gospel is recorded, which is the power of God unto salvation, *because therein is the righteousness revealed*, Rom. i. 17. The Bible contains the record of the eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus,—of the unsearchable riches of Christ,—of the eternal election of Him to be the Mediator between God and man, and of the eternal election of his people in Him,—of his incarnation, humiliation, and exaltation to glory. And "in as much as he who hath builded the house bath more honour than the house," insomuch is there a higher display of the glory of God, in the history contained in the Bible, of Him who was "God manifest

in the flesh," than is afforded in the creation, and the discovery of all the other works of God in the universe, animate and inanimate, of which Jesus Christ is the Creator and the Head. Hence is that preference justified which is given to the Bible above them all, "*Thou hast magnified thy WORD above all thy name.*" The earth and the heavens shall perish,—"*As a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed,—But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.*"

Such, then, is the perfection of the Bible, for the writing of which, the most complete inspiration was absolutely indispensable, in order that it should be entirely the word and the work of God,—in thought,—in meaning,—in style,—in expression,—in every part, and in the strictest sense, the word or voice of God to man. Each part is necessary in its place to complete the whole,—and if any one part were wanting, however inconsiderable it may appear, that absolute perfection, that complete adaptation to the end proposed, which belong to the *Book of God*, would be destroyed.

Christians ought to beware of giving up in the smallest degree the inspiration of the Bible. That precious deposit is now delivered to their keeping, as the first portion of it was committed to the Jews. The Jews were constituted the "witnesses" of Jehovah, Isaiah, xliii. 10, 12 ; until the time arrived, when, in his sovereign pleasure, he appointed other "witnesses," Acts, i. 8. The nation of Israel was his peculiar treasure,—an holy nation, Exodus, xix. 5, 6 ;

till, by their final rejection of his Son, they forfeited that title, and he gave his vineyard to other husbandmen, Matth. xxi. 41. They possessed the peculiar name which he had conferred on them, till the prophecy concerning it was fulfilled, when it was left "for a curse," Isaiah, lxxv. 15; and when a new name was bestowed on those who were henceforward to be acknowledged as the people of God, Acts, xi. 26; 1 Peter, iv. 16. Having become the depositaries of the whole volume of inspiration, let *Christians* regard it with the same unshaken fidelity, with which, before being completed, "*the words which the Lord of Hosts hath sent in his Spirit by the former prophets,*" Zechariah, vii. 7, 12, were preserved by the *Jews*. Let them not weaken by vain reasonings, the impression produced upon their minds by the testimony of the Bible itself, concerning its full inspiration in every part, nor substitute for it, a book which, in their imagination, is only partially inspired,—which contains sometimes the words of God, and sometimes the words of men, who spake not as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but who were only preserved from error, or who wrote "*as any other plain and faithful men might do.*" By such sentiments, the offspring of philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, has the Bible been degraded, and its high title to the designation of "the oracles of God" made void. In opposition to these heretical opinions, be they ancient or modern, let every disciple of Him whose command it is to "search the Scriptures," regard it as a *faithful* saying, and not liable to doubtful interpreta-

tions, that “ *ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*”

APPENDIX.

The following are Extracts on the Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures, from the Works of Eminent Christian Writers.

IRENÆUS, who conversed with Polycarp, the disciple of John, and who himself lived but a few years after that Apostle, says, "Well knowing that the Scriptures are *perfect*, as *dictated* (or spoken) by the word of God, and his Spirit,—a heavy punishment awaits those who add to, or take from, the Scriptures. But we follow the one and only true God, as our teacher; and having his *words* as a rule of truth, do always speak the same things concerning the same things."

To the same purpose, Origen, born in the second century, speaks of it as a common opinion, "That the sacred books are not *writings of men*, but have been written and delivered to us from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the will of the Father of all things, through Jesus Christ." And again, "The sacred Scriptures come from the fulness of the Spirit; so that there is nothing in the Prophets, or the Law, or the Gospel, and the Epistles, which descends not from the Divine Majesty,"—one and the same Spirit proceeding from the one God, teacheth the like things in the Scriptures written before the coming of Christ, and in the Gospels and Apostles." "For my part, I believe that not one jot or tittle of the divine instructions is in vain." "Let us come daily to the wells of the Scriptures, *the waters* of the Holy Spirit, and there draw and carry home a full vessel."—Lardner, vol. II. 172, 488, 495.

“It is asked—If in writing, they (the sacred writers) were so acted upon and inspired by the Holy Spirit, both as to the things themselves, and as to the *words*, that they were free from all error, and that their writings are truly authentic and divine? The adversaries deny this. We affirm it.”

“Scripture proves itself divine from its style; Divine Majesty shining not less from the simplicity than the gravity of its *diction*.”

“Nor can it easily be believed that God, who has dictated and inspired *all and the very words*, to men divinely inspired, has not taken care also about the preservation of them all.”*

“But God has instituted the Scripture, partly by *revelation*, which has been accomplished, 1. By *writing*, as was shown in the giving of the Law. 2. By *commanding*, that it might be written, Deut. xxxi. 19. Rev. i. 19, 3. By *inspiring*, 2 Tim. iii. 16, that is, by suggesting the *things that were to be written*, and infallibly directing the *writing*; so fully, that in all things, whether relating to matters of doctrine or of fact, he not only inspired the things themselves, but has even dictated the *very words*.”†

* Institutio Theologiæ Francisco Turretino, Vol. 1. p. 70. —“Quæritur—An in scribendo ita acti et inspirati fuerint a Spiritu Sancto, (scriptores sacri,) et quoad res ipsas, et quoad verba, ut ab omni errore immunes fuerint, et scripta ipsorum vere sint authentica et divina? Adversarii negant; nos affirmamus.”

“Scriptura seipsam divinam probat—ex parte *stylî*; Divina *Majestas*, non minus ex simplicitate quam gravitate dictionis elucens.” Page 71.

“Nec facile credi potest, Deum, qui omnia et singula verba viris Θεοπνευστοῖς dictavit et inspiravit, de omnibus etiam conservandis non curasse.” Page 80.

† Theologia, &c. Petro Van Mastricht, Vol. I. p. 21. sect.

“The Scripture is principally called the Word of God, on account of the infallible inspiration which belongs to it—to the *words* equally as to the things, in which, therefore, nothing irrelevant occurs, although God has wisely accommodated himself to the style of each of the amanuenses in writing, as to the sound of the voice in speaking.”*

“The Holy Spirit made use of the pens of the Evangelists, and of the Apostles, for the writings of the New Testament, as he had formerly made use of those of Moses and the Prophets for the Old. He furnished them with the occasions for writing. He gave them the desire, the power to do it. The matter, the form, the order, the economy, the *expressions*, are of his immediate inspiration, and of his direction.”†

19.—“Condidit autem Deus scripturam : partim *revelatione*, quæ peracta est, 1. *Scribendo*, ut in decalogo conspicuum. 2. *Mandando*, ut scriberetur, Deut. xxxi. 19. Apoc. i. 19. 3. *Inspirando*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. *h. e.* suggerendo *scribenda*, et infallibiliter dirigendo *scriptionem*. Usque adeo, ut in omnibus, sive in jure versentur, sive in facto ; non solum res ipsas inspiraverit, sed etiam singula verba dictarit : partim *canonizatione*,” &c.

* Johannis Marckii Theologiæ Medulla, &c.—“Scriptura *verbum Dei* præcipue dicitur ob *inspirationem infallibilem*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Pet. i. 20, 21, quæ pertinet—ad *verba* denique æque quam ad res, in quibus proinde nihil inepti occurrit ; etiamsi singulorum Amanuensium stylo prudenter Deus se accommodaverit in scribendo, æque quam vocis sono in loquendo.” Page 12 and 13, sect. 5.

† Claude.—Posthumous Works, Vol. IV. p. 228.—“Le Saint Esprit s'est servi de la plume des Evangelistes et des Apotres pour les ecritures du Nouveau Testament, comme il s'etoit autre fois servi de celles de Moyse et des Prophetes pour l'Ancien. Il leur a fourni les occasions d'ecrire, il leur en a

HOOKER, in his first sermon on Jude, says, "God, which lightened thus the eyes of their understanding, giving them knowledge by unusual and extraordinary means, did also miraculously himself frame and fashion their words and writings, insomuch that a greater difference there seemeth not to be between the manner of their knowledge, than there is between the manner of their speech and ours. . . . But *God hath made my mouth like a sword*, saith Isay. And we have received, saith the Apostle, *not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are given to us of God, which things also we speak, not in words, which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost doth teach.* This is that which the Prophets mean by those books written full, within and without; which books were so often delivered them to eat, not because God fed them with ink and paper, but to teach us, that so oft as he employed them in this heavenly work, they neither spake nor wrote any word of their own, but uttered syllable by syllable as the Spirit put it into their mouths, no otherwise than the harp or the lute doth give a sound according to the discretion of his hands that holdeth and striketh it with skill. The difference is only this: An instrument, whether it be a pipe or harp, maketh a distinction in the times and sounds, which distinction is well perceived of the hearer, the instrument itself understanding not what is piped or harped. The Prophets and holy men of God not so. '*I opened my mouth,*' saith *Ezechiel*, '*and God reached me a scroul, saying, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and*

donné le desir et les forces. La matiere, la forme, la ordre, l'economie, les expressions sont de son inspiration immediate et de sa direction."

fill thy bowels with this I give thee. I eat, and it was sweet in my mouth as honey, saith the Prophet. Yea sweeter, I am persuaded, than either honey or the honey comb. For herein they were not like harps or lutes, but they felt, they felt the power and strength of their own words. When they spake of our peace, every corner of their hearts was filled with joy. When they prophesied of mournings, lamentations, and woes to fall upon us, they wept in the bitterness and indignation of spirit, the arm of the Lord being mighty and strong upon them."

In the dedication of Hooker's Sermon of Mr Henry Jackson to Mr George Summaster, Principal of Broad-Gates Hall, in Oxford, the former says, "Sir—Your kind acceptance of a former testification of that respect I owe you, hath made me venture to show the world these Godly Sermons under your name. In which, as every point is worth observation, so some especially are to be noted. The first, that, as the spirit of Prophecy is from God himself, who doth inwardly heat and enlighten the hearts and minds of his holy penmen, (which if some would diligently consider, they would not puzzle themselves with the contentions of *Scott, and Thomas, whether God only, or his ministering spirits, do infuse into men's minds prophetic revelations, per species intelligibiles,*) so God framed their words also. Whence the holy father *St Augustine* religiously observeth, That all those that understand the sacred writers, will also perceive, that they ought not to use other words than they did, in expressing those heavenly mysteries which their hearts conceived, as the *Blessed Virgin* did our Saviour, *by the Holy Ghost.*"—Hooker's Works, 1662, pp. 283, 4.

BOYLE, in his "Considerations touching the Style of the Holy Scriptures," *everywhere* asserts that God is the *author* of the Scriptures, and the writers no more than his secretaries, as page 17. He calls the Holy Ghost

“ the writer of the Scriptures, and the method of the Scriptures the Holy Ghost’s way of writing,” p. 56. “ The inspired writers had their pens guided by an omniscient hand, and were but the several secretaries of the same enditer,” p. 76. “ We are not to believe that so divine an enditer, by secretaries,” &c. p. 79. “ The prophetic spirit that endited them,” (the Scriptures,) p. 81. Boyle calls God the author of the Scriptures, p. 122; and next page he calls the Bible “ a book published by an omniscient enditer.” The Scriptures are “ God’s dictates,” p. 125. “ Amongst the thirteen articles of the Jewish creed, one acknowledges the very expressions of the Law, (or Pentateuch,) to have been inspired by God,” pp. 128, 129. “ He vouchsafes to speak to *us* in almost as glorious a manner as he did to *Moses*,” p. 133. And speaking against profaneness, as it relates to the Scriptures, he says, “ and perhaps passing to the impudence of perverting inspired expressions,” p. 178.

Dr OWEN, in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Exercitation 1, expresses himself as follows. “ And thus, not this or that part, but 2 Timothy, iii. 16, all Scripture was given by inspiration. And herein all the parts or books of it are absolutely equal. And in the going out of the whole, 2 Pet. i. 21, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. So that whatever different means God at any time might make use of, in the communication of his mind and will unto any of the prophets or penmen of the Scripture, it was this divine inspiration, and being acted by the Holy Ghost both as to things and words, that rendered them infallible revealers of him unto the church. And thus the foundation of the canonical authority of the books of the Scripture, is absolutely the same in and unto them all, without the least variety either from any difference in kind or degree.”

Dr OWEN says, in his book “ *Of the Divine Origin*—

nall, with the authority, self-evidencing power, and light of the *Holy Scriptures*," p. 5, 10, "The various ways of special Revelation, by *Dreams, Visions, Audible Voices, Inspirations*, with that peculiar one of the *Law-giver*, under the Old Testament, called *face to face*, Exod. xxxiii. 11, Deut. xxxiv. 10, and Numbers, xi. 8, with that which is compared with it, and exalted above it, (Heb. i. 1, 2, 3,) in the *New*, by the *Son*, from the bosom of the Father, John, i. 17, 18, are not of my present consideration, all of them belonging to the manner of the thing inquired after, not the thing itself.

"By the assertion then laid down of God *speaking in the prophets of old*, from the beginning to the end of that long tract of time, consisting of 1000 years, wherein he gave out the writings of the Old Testament; two things are ascertained unto us, which are the *foundation* of our present discourse.

"1. That the *Laws* they made known, the *Doctrines* they delivered, the *Instructions* they gave, the *Stories* they recorded, the *Promises* of Christ, the *Prophecies* of Gospel times they gave out, and revealed, were not their own, not conceived in their *Minds*, not formed by their *Reasonings*, not retained in their *Memories* from what they had heard, not by any means beforehand comprehended by them, (1 Pet. i. 10, 11,) but were all of them *immediately* from God; there being only a passive concurrence of their rational faculties in their reception, without any such *active obedience*, as by any Law they might be obliged unto.* Hence, 2dly, God was so *with* them, and by the Holy Ghost so *spoke in them*, as to their *receiving* of the word from him, and their delivering of it unto others by *speaking* or writing, as that they were not themselves enabled by any *habitual light*, knowledge or conviction of Truth, to declare his Mind and Will, but only *acted* as they were immediately *moved* by him. Their

Tongue in what they said, or their hand in what they wrote, was no more at their own disposal, than the *Pen* is, in the hand of an expert *Writer*.

“Hence, as far as their own *Personal* concerns, as Saints and Believers, did lie in them, they are said to make a *diligent inquiry* into and investigation of the things, which the *Spirit of Christ that spake in themselves did signify*, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Without *this*, though their *Visions* were *express*, so that in them their *eyes* were said to *be open*, Numb. xxiv. 3, 4; yet they understood them not. Therefore also, they *studied* the *Writings* and *Prophecies* of one another, Dan. ix. 2. Thus they attained a *saving* useful habitual knowledge of the Truths delivered by themselves and others, by the *Illumination* of the Holy Ghost, through the *Study* of the Word, even as we, Psalm cxix. 104. But as to the *receiving* of the Word from God, as God *spake* in them, they obtained nothing by Study or Meditation by inquiry or reading, Amos, vii. 15. Whether we consider the *matter* or *manner* of what they received and delivered, or their receiving and delivering of it, they were but as an instrument of *Music*, giving a sound according to the hand, intention, and skill of him that strikes it.

“This is variously expressed. Generally it is said, the *word was* to this, or that prophet, which we have rendered, the *word came* unto them. Ezek. i. 3. It *came expressly*. It had a *subsistence* given unto it, or an effectual *in-being*, by the Spirit’s *entering* into him, verse 14. Now this *coming* of the word unto them, had oftentimes such a *greatness*, and expression of the majesty of God upon it, as it filled them with *dread* and reverence of him, Hab. iii. 16, and also greatly affected even their outward man, Dan. viii. 27. But this dread and terror (which Satan strove to imitate, in his filthy *Tripodes*,) was peculiar to the Old Testament, and belonged to the *pædagogic thereof*; Heb. xii.

18, 19, 20, 21. The Spirit in the declaration of the *New Testament*, gave out his mind and will in a way of more *liberty* and glory. 2 *Cor.* 3. The *expressness* and immediacy of revelation was the same; but the *manner* of it related more to that glorious liberty in fellowship and communion with the Father, whereunto believers had then an access provided them by Jesus Christ. *Heb.* ix. 8. *ch.* x. 19, 20. *ch.* xii. 23, 24. So our Saviour tells his Apostles, *Matt.* x. 20, *You are not the speakers* of what you deliver, as other men are, the figment and imagination of whose hearts are the fountain of all that they speak; and he adds this reason, *The Spirit of the Father* (is) *he that speaketh in you.* Thus the word that came unto them, was a *book* which they took *in*, and gave out without any alteration of one tittle or syllable. *Ezek.* ii. 8, 9, 10, 11. *ch.* iii. 3. *Revel.* x. 9, 10, 11.

“Moreover, when the *word* was thus *come* to the prophets, and God had spoken in them, it was not in their power to *conceal* it, the hand of the Lord being strong upon them. They were not now only on a general account to utter the truth they were made acquainted withall, and to speak the things they had heard and seen, which was their common *preaching* work according to the *analogie* of what they had received; *Acts*, iv. 20; but also the very *individual* words that they had received were to be declared. When the word was *come* to them, it was as a *fire* within them, that must be delivered, or it would consume them, *Psal.* xxxix. 3; *Jer.* xx. 9; *Amos*, iii. 8. *chap.* vii. 15, 16. So *Jonah* found his attempt to *hide* the word that he had received, to be altogether vain.”

ESTIUS, in his commentary on the words, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,*” says, “It is rightly and most truly concluded from this place, that all the sacred and canonical Scripture is written by the dictate of the Holy Spirit, in such a manner

certainly, that not only the sentiments, but also the particular words, and the order of the words, (*verba singula et verborum ordo*,) and all the arrangement, is from God speaking as by himself—for this is the meaning of the expression—that Scripture is divinely inspired.” The theologians in the University of Douay, in which Estius taught theology, had made a decree of the above tenor, directly condemning Simon’s opinion on the subject, and the Father Jesuits of Louvain. Here, then, is the decree of a whole University in support of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. These Douay Divines declared that they had examined the propositions of the Jesuits of Louvain, by order of the Archbishop of Cambray and of Malines, and of the Bishop of Gand.

The above extracts are not given in the way of authority; on such a subject no authority except that of the Scriptures is admissible. They are introduced in opposition to the assertions of those who speak as if the verbal inspiration of the Bible was a novel doctrine.

FINIS.

THE
THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

OF THE

REV. DANIEL WILSON,
REV. DR PYE SMITH,

AND THE
REV. DR DICK,

PROVED TO BE ERRONEOUS;

WITH REMARKS

ON THE

CHRISTIAN OBSERVER, & ECLECTIC REVIEW.

BY

ALEXANDER CARSON, A.M.
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

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REVIEW, &c.

OF all the subjects that have lately come under discussion among Christians, that of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is doubtless the most important. The honour of Revelation, the comfort and edification of the believer, and the truth of the express statements of the Scriptures themselves, demand our belief that the Bible, as originally given, is DIVINE IN EVERY WORD.

That they who deny the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, should be anxious to free themselves from the incumbrance of the inspiration of the records that contain it, or which comes to the same thing, should modify the doctrine so as to destroy it, while they retain the word, is very natural. Accordingly, such writers, while they nominally acknowledge the inspiration of the Sacred Volume, have contrived to accompany the admission with so many exceptions, to modify the theory into such a variety of forms, and to load the subject with

so many distinctions, that with the utmost facility they can make every obnoxious passage bend to their purpose.

But that any real lover of the word of God, to whom it is sweeter than honey from the comb, and more precious than fine gold, and all the treasures of the earth, should in any measure give countenance to such profane and impious conduct, is most deeply to be deplored. Surely this is a thing most incongruous and inexcusable. Little, however, as this could have been anticipated, a number of writers have appeared professing the most evangelical sentiments, yet with a more than Socinian zeal, labouring to lower the inspiration of the book of God. Whether they are overawed by German neology, and flatter themselves that by giving up a part, they can more successfully retain the remainder; or whether they labour under such an obtuseness of intellect as to be unable to penetrate the alleged difficulties, and really to be convinced that the Scriptures themselves require such modifications of their inspiration, I shall not pretend to determine. Whatever may be the origin of such a sentiment, it is uncalled for by any of the phenomena of Scripture, without foundation in the word of God itself, and directly contrary to its most express statements.

The theory of Mr Wilson, as detailed in the XIIIth of his Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, is in words less shocking than that some time ago proposed by Dr. P. Smith, and the still more shocking system of the Ecclectic Review. Warned no doubt, by the reception of the extravagance of

those writers, Mr W. has proceeded more cautiously, and indeed has expressed himself so guardedly, and with so little developement of system, that it is difficult to determine exactly what he means. From his many full and explicit recognitions of inspiration, and from the want of detail or illustration in the exposition of the theory itself, it is difficult to convict him. We are rather obliged to interpret his meaning as a consequence, than we are enabled to refer to it in express statement. We must bring one part to bear upon another, in order to ascertain the extent of his doctrine. His theory is, that the Scriptures are partly human and partly divine: human in manner, divine in matter. The making of the Bible then has been a partnership business, in which God and man have had their distinct provinces. It is both human and divine, without mixture. Inspiration itself, he distinguishes, with many other writers on this subject, into four kinds or degrees, the inspiration of suggestion—of direction—of elevation—of superintendency.

My first observation on this theory of distinct divine and human parts in the Scriptures, is, that it is not demanded by the facts or phenomena on which he grounds its necessity. These phenomena are summed up at page 499. "In order to collect 'the phenomena on the other side,'" says the author, "let us open the New Testament again." Very well, Mr Wilson: this is without doubt the only way to settle the controversy. Open then the New Testament, and if it teaches your theory, I shall submit to it with the most profound respect.

What then have you found in the New Testament to support your doctrine? "We see," says the author, "on the very face of the whole, that the writers speak naturally, use the style, language, manner of address familiar to them." Demonstration, surely demonstration! The writers of the New Testament speak naturally, therefore their writings are partly human! So then in order to have had the Scriptures solely divine, the writers must have spoken unnaturally, or at least have avoided their natural manner. Is it then impossible for God to speak through men in their natural manner, without making the communication partly human? Could he not use their style and manner of address, as well as their mouth, or their pen, while both matter and words were his own? Even in the use of the peculiar style of each writer, there is inspiration. The writers are not *left*, as Mr Wilson supposes, to use their own style; it is a part of the divine wisdom to use this style, and the writers are as much under the influence of the Spirit in this, as in their conception of the most important doctrine. The Spirit of God uses the varied style of the writers. The writers are not left to themselves in this. The mould therefore is as much divine as the matter. When God speaks to man, he puts his thoughts and words into the form which is natural to those through whom he speaks. This serves many important purposes, of which not the least important is, that it serves as a touchstone to the dispositions of men with regard to Revelation. They who hate the truths

revealed, have, from this peculiarity of inspiration, a plausible pretence to deny inspiration altogether. They find in the Scriptures a variety of style, according to the number of the writers, and therefore ascribe all to man. This peculiarity serves also a valuable purpose with respect to Christians themselves. By affording a pretence for speculations and theories, it manifests the mournful fact, that even they who have been enlightened in the saving truth, have, in many other things, a large proportion of that worldly wisdom that savours not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.

“ There are,” continues our author, “ peculiar casts of talents, expression, modes of reasoning in each author.” True, very true. Yet this does not imply that there is one word in the whole volume, as originally written, which is not God’s. Is it not God who has given to men this peculiarity of talents and modes of reasoning, and why could he not employ these in communicating his word?

“ The language is that of the country and age where they live.” How does this phenomenon bear upon the theory? “ They employ all their faculties; they search, examine, weigh, reason, as holy and sincere men, in such a cause, might be supposed to do.” Well, and in all these, may they not be inspired? Is it not possible for the Holy Spirit to convey his own thoughts, and his own words, through the *searching, examining, weighing, reasoning* of a man, as easily as if he spoke through a statue? The only thing that surprises me in all

this, is, that there should be any intellect to which this peculiarity of inspiration should, upon due consideration, present a difficulty on the supposition of the complete verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

“ They use all their natural and acquired knowledge.” They use their knowledge both natural and acquired : But without doubt, they do not use all their own knowledge, whether natural or acquired. The Holy Spirit used as much of their knowledge, both natural and acquired, as was to his purpose. The natural and acquired knowledge of the writers of the Scriptures, so far as it is communicated in the divine word, is stamped with the same seal that impresses the discoveries of the character of God. I accept them as being as truly divine, as the gospel itself. “ Their memory furnishes them ‘ with facts, or the documents and authentic records of ‘ the time are consulted by them for information.” Very true ; but they do not relate every fact that they retained in their memory, or that they knew from documents. Nor were they left to their own discretion, as to the facts to be related. The Holy Spirit gave them their selection of facts, and the words to record them. They were as truly inspired in relating what they saw, or in copying a genealogical table, if ever they copied one, as in revealing the way of salvation.

“ They plead with those to whom they are sent, ‘ they address the heart, they expostulate, they ‘ warn, they invite.” Is there any thing in all this, inconsistent with the complete verbal inspiration of

the Scriptures? Does this imply that the Scriptures are partly human? What is there to prevent the belief, that *these pleadings, these addresses to the heart, these expostulations, these warnings, these invitations*, are all inspired fully in matter and words? Was it impossible for the Holy Spirit to convey his pleadings, his addresses to the heart, his expostulations, his warnings, his invitations, by those of the inspired writers? What inconsistency is there in supposing that the Holy Spirit would convey his own exhortations, in the words of an exhortation from an apostle, as inspired by him? The only thing for which I am at a loss, is to conceive how a difficulty can be felt in this matter.

“The mind of man is working every where.” Very true; the Holy Spirit speaks through man, not as he did through Balaam’s ass, or as he might do through a statue, but as a rational instrument. But in all this working of the mind of man, there is nothing that is not truly God’s.

“In the historical books, the Evangelists follow their own trains of recollection; they relate incidents as they observe them, or were reported to them.” In whatever way they were put in possession of the matter related, they relate every thing as given them by the Holy Ghost. “In the devotional and epistolary books, again, natural talent, appropriate feelings and judgment, the peculiarities of the individual are manifest.” Who ever doubted this? Such a peculiarity by no means implies that such compositions are partly human. It is quite consistent with the fact, that both matter and words are from God.

“Once more,” says our author, “St Luke preserves his characteristic manner in the gospel and the Acts; St Paul is always the same; St John may be known in his several productions. Lastly, the prophetic parts are more elevated; and yet breathe the spirit, and retain the particular phraseology of the writers. These are the phenomena on the other side; these are the parts of man.”

Now that I might do the writer and my readers justice, I have quoted every line, and even every word of the account of the second class of phenomena. And what is the whole but one fact, one phenomenon, namely, that each of the inspired writers exhibits his own characteristic style and mode of reasoning, and makes use of knowledge which could have been possessed without inspiration! This fact might no doubt be illustrated, from Luke and Paul and John, and by a thousand references. Still it is but one fact, and a fact by no means even apparently contradictory to the passages asserting full inspiration. Mr Wilson then imposes on his careless reader, when he gives to the illustration of one phenomenon, the appearance of a collection of phenomena; and he grossly misinterprets that part which exhibits it as in any way contradictory to the entire inspiration of the Scriptures.

My second observation is, that Mr Wilson's two classes of phenomena, must either be reconciled on my plan, or they are not reconcilable at all. If there is any thing in the Scriptures merely human, if man has one part in such a sense that the same thing cannot be ascribed to God, then such a part is not in-

spired, and cannot in any sense be called God's word. If the Bible is a book partly human and partly divine, it cannot, as a whole, be the word of God, nor be justly ascribed to him as its sole author. Accordingly, if Mr Wilson's paradoxes are not explained on the view which I have given, they are real contradictions. "If every thing," says he, "is divine, 'how is it that we see every thing human?'" Now, how is it that this paradox can be explained as a truth? How is it that any thing in the word of God can be said to be human? Only in the sense of having been written by man. But agreeable to the theory that God and man has each his distinct part in this composition, this paradox is a contradiction. If man has a part solely his own in the composition of the Bible, every thing in the Bible is not divine; if God has his part in this composition, every thing cannot be human. The paradox must be harmonized not by a thing that ascribes distinct parts to God, or the writers in the composition of the book; but by supposing that the Bible being the word of God, may in another point of view be ascribed to man as the instrument. In this sense, the epistle to the Romans may be called Paul's epistle, while it is the word of God in a higher sense; such a mode of speaking is common on all subjects. The king built the palace, the architect built the palace, and the masons built the palace. In this obvious light, we are to understand the passages that ascribe the different parts of the book of God to the writers of them. But this plain truth Mr Wilson has chosen to represent

as a paradox, and a paradox that from his explanation of it, must be a real contradiction. "The books," he says, "are human, and yet they are divine.— 'They are the word of God, and yet they are the word of man.'" Now though in the above way, it is possible to explain this paradox in a harmless sense, yet that explanation is harsh, and not justified by the Scripture phraseology in which an epistle is ascribed to an Apostle. The latter mode of speaking is demanded by necessity, justified by use on every subject, and its meaning is obvious to a child. But the above paradoxes are not of this description; the books of Scripture are never by the Scriptures called *human*, they are never called the *word of man*. To call any thing *human* as contradistinguished from *divine*, as in this instance, is to deny that it is divine; to call any thing *the word of man* as contradistinguished from *the word of God*, is to deny that it is the word of God. Mr Wilson's phraseology then is not only paradoxical, but improper, and not paralleled by any instance of Scripture phraseology. However, as I am fully convinced that the author had a harmless meaning, I charge him with nothing more than an impropriety of expression. But it is an impropriety that should not be considered as trifling, for a just explanation of it, according to the use of language, must make it fully as shocking in him as it is in appearance. It is not to be justified on any principle to call the word of God either a *human* work, or the *work of man*.

But the support of his theory, will not suffer Mr Wilson's paradoxes to shelter themselves under this

mode of explanation. "The books are divine, and 'yet they are human,'—" "they are the word of 'God, and yet the word of man.'" Now what are the grounds on which he asserts this? Not merely that the book inspired by God, was written by man, but that God and man are jointly the authors of this book, each having a distinct share. If so, the books are not all *divine*, nor all *human*; but partly *divine* and partly *human*, his theory then makes his paradoxes a contradiction.

That what Mr Wilson calls his second class of phenomena, must be considered in the light in which I have represented them, is clear from his own account of them, when he is reconciling them with the first class. When they are introduced to us for this purpose, they have the most innocent face imaginable, without the smallest appearance of an impudent intention to derogate from the honours of inspiration. "Instead of addressing us immediately," says the author, "God is pleased to use men as his 'instruments.'" Now what can have less appearance of contradiction to the inspiration of every word of Scripture than this. It is so silly to state it in this light, that it is almost silly to repeat it. "Instead of speaking to us severally by an independent revelation, he has consigned his will to 'us at once in the Holy Scriptures.'" Now can any one conceive a light in which this even appears to bear on the point in hand? As to inspiration, is it not the same thing whether God speaks to every individual by a distinct revelation, or whether he speaks to all in the same revelation? "Instead of making

‘ known that will,” says Mr Wilson, “ in the language of angels, or by the skill of poets and philosophers, he has been pleased to choose the unlettered Apostles and Evangelists.” What has this to do with the subject of inspiration? How does this fact appear to contradict the passages that ascribe the Scriptures wholly to God? Why is this introduced as a fact to be reconciled with the first class of phenomena? Does the fact, that in the Scriptures God has not addressed us in the language of angels, appear to contradict the notion of their inspiration, either as to matter or manner? If God should speak to men in the language of angels, would the revelation be God’s, in any sense, in which it is not His, as contained in the Scriptures? Had he spoken by the skill of poets and philosophers, would the manner have been divine, in any sense in which it is not now divine? Has he not given some parts of the Scriptures in the language of poetry? Are these more divine as to manner, than the parts written by the fishermen? “ And,” says Mr Wilson, “ instead of using these as mere organic instruments of his power, he has thought right to leave them to the operations of their own minds, and the dictates of their own knowledge, habits, and feelings, as to the manner of communicating his will.” This is the only thing that can be said to have any reference to the subject at all; yet, if unexceptionably expressed, it would not have even the appearance of a contradiction to the phenomena of the first class. God did not *leave* the writers of Scripture to the operations of their own mind, &c.; but

he has employed the operations of their mind in his work. Here then we see, that in reconciling his two classes of phenomena, the writer exhibits the second class in the most harmless point of view, and it is only in his application of the system afterwards, that he gives them a different character. The light then in which the two classes of phenomena can be reconciled, is not a light in which they will bear the author's conclusions.

My third observation is, that the distinction between *matter* and *form*, as to their author, is a groundless figment, invented for the service of this theory. God is as much the author of the *manner* of the Scriptures, as of the *matter* of them; and the sense in which they may be said to be human in their manner, they may be said to be human in their matter. In what sense are they human in their manner? As they have been written by men, after the manner of human writing, with the style characteristic of those by whom they have been written. And has not the matter of these been the result of human thought, according to the operations of the mind, and with language occurring to the persons who were inspired to deliver them? The Scriptures are the thoughts and words of the writers, in the same sense in which they are in their style. It has pleased God to communicate his will in this way; so that divine truth is ushered into the world as the result of the operations of the human mind. Even the most glorious doctrines of revelation, are not an exception to this. If we find Paul's style, we find also Paul's gospel;

and his statements of truth, his arguments, &c. &c. are as much his, as his manner of writing. In the same sense that we can say, that the style is Paul's, we can also say, that the thoughts are Paul's. They are both Paul's in one point of view; in another, they are both God's. God, in conveying his truth, has used the intellectual operations, as well as the characteristic style of the writers whom he employed.

If this is the case with respect, even to the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, how much more evidently is it so with respect to those parts of Scripture that relate to things properly human. How much of the Scriptures are employed in relating the history of earthly things? Is not this human matter, as truly as it is related in human style? But though, in one sense, both in matter and manner, an historical event is human; in another, it is divine in both. This writer is still more inexcusable for such a distinction, since he seems to hold, that many things in Scripture needed only divine superintendency. Are not such things then, in every sense human; in matter as well as in manner? Besides, is it not as common to ascribe the matter of the Scripture to the writers of them, as to ascribe their manner? Do we not speak of Paul's Epistles? Is not the matter included in this appellation? This ascribes every thing in the Epistles of Paul, in one sense, to himself. We speak more frequently of Paul's thoughts, Paul's doctrine, Paul's reasoning, Paul's arguments, than we do of Paul's style. Yet the simplest peasant

never views this phraseology as inconsistent with his firm conviction of the full verbal inspiration of the whole Sacred volume. Such difficulties are only conjured up by the invention of theorists, to make void some part of the word of God, or to enlarge the field of critical investigation.

That a human style may, in another sense, be divine, may be made intelligible to a child by an illustration. Suppose, to give greater popularity to a work of genius, a writer should choose to imitate the style and manner of Sir Walter Scott; and that the imitation should be so perfect, that the public could not distinguish. Now, such a style would be, in one sense, the style of Sir Walter; but in another, it would be the style of the author. In like manner, the style of the Scriptures, is the characteristic style of the different writers, but God is the author of it. The style is as truly God's, as the matter; for if he has employed the style of different writers, he has likewise employed the expressions, thoughts, reasoning, and arguments of the different writers. In one sense, the Scriptures are all God's; in another, they are the writings of Moses and the Prophets, the Evangelists and the Apostles. The same writer, on different occasions, may employ different styles; and God has employed the characteristic style of each of the persons whom he inspired to deliver his oracles. If he has employed them as rational instruments with respect to style, he has likewise employed them as rational instruments with respect to thoughts, reasoning, arguments and words.

That the different styles of the writers of Scripture may, in a certain sense, be ascribed to God, is clear, even from the concession of the author. He admits, that the prophetic part of Scripture needed the inspiration of words; and that in this, as well as in the rest of the Scriptures, we have a characteristic style. If then we have the style of Isaiah, even when all the words with their collocation and syntax were chosen of God, is not the style his also? For what is style abstracted from the words that express it? The distinction, then, between the matter and manner of Scripture, as having a different author, is visionary and groundless.

My fourth observation is, that Mr Wilson's theory, both as to the distinction between matter and manner, and as to the different degrees of their operation, is utterly without foundation in the word of God itself. What can we know of this, or of any other subject of revelation, but as the Scriptures themselves teach us? But where do they teach these distinctions? What portion of the word of God asserts, that the matter and the manner of Scripture are to be ascribed to different authors? Where do they teach, that there are different kinds of inspiration? If no such doctrine is taught by the Scriptures, then it is one of the traditions of men, by which they, like the Pharisees, have made void the word of God. It deserves no respect. It is not necessary even to refute it; for to shew that the Scriptures do not teach such a thing, is to refute it. The Scriptures declare, that they are the inspired word of God; but

in the whole Sacred Volume, there is not a hint, that they are inspired in a different sense, or in a different degree. The man, therefore, who invents a theory, that ascribes to Scripture different kinds of inspiration, is as inexcusable, as the man who, in explaining the account of the creation, asserts that the earth was an old planet repaired, or a splinter from the sun. Where have our theorists found, that inspiration is divided into suggestion, direction, elevation, and superintendency? Where the Pharisees found that it was a sin to eat with unwashen hands.

But let us not too hastily make assertions. Let us hear what Mr Wilson alleges: "By referring to the language of the Apostles, as quoted in our last lecture, we shall find that the divine inspiration was extended to every part of the canonical writings, in proportion as each part stood related to the religion," 505. *The language of the Apostles*.—I do not wish a better authority. The language of the Apostles teach such a doctrine! Where, Mr Wilson? You have quoted no such passage. "Whatever weight the different parts of the Sacred edifice were intended to sustain, a correspondent strength of inspiration was placed, as it were, at the foundation." Fine, very fine; and is demonstration itself more convincing? What can be more certain, than that the different parts of a building ought to have a strength proportional to the weight which they are intended to bear? Unluckily it happens, that there is a small flaw in the figure. It has not the smallest

reference to the subject which it is brought to illustrate. The different truths of revelation have a different degree of importance, which might be well illustrated by this truly beautiful figure. But it requires as much inspiration to tell what o'clock it is by inspiration, as to reveal the gospel itself. If all Scripture is given by inspiration, the reference to Paul's cloak requires as much inspiration, as those passages that declare the way of salvation. The question is not, whether many things in Scripture might have been known without inspiration, as there are unquestionably others that could not at all have been otherwise known: But the question is, whether the most trivial thing said to be inspired, can be inspired in any other sense than things of utmost moment. As long as it stands recorded, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," so long the honour of revelation is as much concerned in the inspiration of an incidental allusion, as in that of the most fundamental truth.

In the following extract, the author gives us a specification of different things that require a different extent of inspiration, but which have no reference to the subject at all. "Sometimes," says he, "we read of divine messages by visions, 'dreams, angelic voices; at other times the Almighty appears to have revealed truth immediately to the minds of the Apostles.'" Now, had the author proposed to point out the different ways in which revelation was given, this would have been to his purpose. But it has no relation to the extent of inspiration. Whether a thing were revealed

by a vision, dream, or angelic voice; or without any intervention, the degree of inspiration is the same. "Sometimes," he continues, "the sacred writers were wrapt in the overpowering communications of the spirit. At other times, and as the matter varied, their memory was fortified to recal the Saviour's life, doctrines, miracles, parables, discourses." Had Paul been permitted to relate what he saw in the third heavens, the extent of the inspiration of his account of the matter, would not have been greater than when he relates his own history. If his account of the latter be a part of the Scriptures, it is given by the inspiration of God; and therefore is God's both in matter and words. Who told Mr Wilson, that in the account of the Saviour's life, doctrines, miracles, parables, discourses, the memory of the Apostles was merely fortified? Has he got any new message from heaven? Perhaps it will be said, this was all that was necessary; this would be arrogance in an angel, and would deliver him into chains of darkness to be reserved for the judgment of the great day. Vain men will be wise! who can tell what is necessary on such a subject, but God only? Who dare make distinctions, where God has made none? God has said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," without any hint of different degrees of inspiration. Who then dare say that one part of Scripture is less inspired than another? besides, a man's memory might be so fortified, that he could remember every fact

and circumstance with the utmost exactness, he might be able to relate every thing that ever he heard, with every word in its proper place ; and after all, be unfit for writing any of the gospels. Were an illiterate man to be put in possession of every fact in Gibbons' History, would he be fit to write the decline and fall of the Roman Empire ? Such a man will have full as much need of words as of ideas. Much more in the history of Christ, must an inspired writer have all the matter and all the words. None but the Holy Spirit can judge what is to be expressed, and what is to be omitted ; and in what phraseology it can be most suitably exhibited. When an inspired writer gives us an account of his own feelings, we depend not on either his knowledge, or expression. Though he speaks concerning what is most intimately known to him, he speaks the things of God, in the words of God. " In a different matter," continues Mr Wilson, " an author accompanies ' St Paul, and records what he saw and heard. ' Again, an Apostle hears of dissensions in the ' churches, and is moved by the blessed spirit ' to write to them, to denounce judgments, to ' prescribe a course of conduct. At other times, ' he enters upon a series of divine argument ; ' delivers in order the truths of the gospel, or ' expounds the figurative economy of Moses." Very true, very true. But in all these things there is but one kind of inspiration. All this is called the word of God, and is said to be given by inspiration ; and therefore in matter and words must be

God's. Do the Scriptures any where speak of these things as being differently inspired? not one word of all this is in the least to the purpose.

The author does not pretend to determine the extent of inspiration in each of these cases, but he says, "we infer from the uniform language of the 'New Testament, that in each case such assistance, and only such assistance was afforded, as the emergencies of it required.'" Now, as I set as much value upon a legitimate inference from the word of God, as I do ^{as I do} an express declaration, I have a great curiosity to hear what is this uniform language of the New Testament, from which such a limitation and distinction of inspiration are inferred. In no copy of the New Testament that ever happened to fall into any hands, is there the slightest hint on the subject.

But after declaring that it is neither needful nor possible to determine the extent of inspiration in each case, the author gives us a most edifying page, in an attempt to draw that line which it is neither needful nor possible to draw. I have heard of a divine who in one head of discourse, proposed to speak of the revealed glories of heaven; and in another the unrevealed glories of heaven. Surely Mr Wilson's intrepid attempt to do what is neither needful nor possible, manifests equal theological heroism. "The prophetic parts, the doctrines of pure revelation, the historical facts beyond the reach of human knowledge, all the great outlines of Christianity, both as to doctrine and practice, were probably of the inspiration of sug-

‘ gestion, both as to the matter and the words,
 ‘ (for we think in words.) Where the usual
 ‘ means of information, or the efforts of memory
 ‘ were enough, as in most of the gospels and acts;
 ‘ the inspiration of direction may be supposed to
 ‘ have sufficed. Where the exposition of duty,
 ‘ or the rebuke of error, or exhortation to growth
 ‘ in grace, was the subject, the inspiration of ele-
 ‘ vation and strength may be considered as afforded.
 ‘ When matters more incidental occur, the inspira-
 ‘ tion, still lessening with the necessity, was
 ‘ probably that of superintendency only, preserving
 ‘ from all improprieties which might diminish the
 ‘ effect of the whole, and providing for inferior,
 ‘ but not unimportant points of instruction. Even
 ‘ the slightest allusions to proverbial sayings, to
 ‘ the works of nature, to history, were possibly
 ‘ not entirely out of the range of the watchful
 ‘ guardianship of the Holy Spirit.” Here is a la-
 mentable specimen of the folly and arrogance of
 the wisdom of man in the things of God. This
 grave evangelical divine parcels out the Scriptures
 according as he fancies that they are more or less
 the word of God; and pronounces his opinions on
 subjects which he himself confesses are untaught
 in the Scriptures. This is the worst species of
 novel-writing; for it substitutes the baseless proba-
 bilities, and visionary suppositions of man, for the
 dictates of the Holy Spirit. It pretends to give us
 information on a point of which it is admitted,
 we are not informed by the word of God. What
 sort of instruction then can this be? What sort of

a mind is it that can derive edification from it? Just that sort of mind that receives for doctrines the commandments of men. In the things of God the Christian should know nothing but what God has revealed. To say that this is a foolish and untaught question, would not be enough, because it is contrary to what is expressly taught; namely, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Mr Wilson has here given us an apocrypha to the New Testament; and like the apocrypha added to the Old Testament, it contradicts the inspired records. How could we say that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, if it is merely *possible* that some things in them are not *entirely* out of the range of the watchful guardianship of the Holy Spirit? Is the Christian then to be sent to his Bible to decide how far each of its parts is inspired? If he is set loose from the authority of the divine declaration that asserts the inspiration of the whole equally, will Mr Wilson's *possibly* be an anchor to him, when his passions, or his interests urge him? If Mr Wilson by his own authority decides, that inspiration *possibly* extends so far, others by a like authority may decide that *possibly* it does not go so far. Though I should displease all the evangelical ministers of London, and of Europe, I will express my utter abhorrence of sentiments so dishonourable to the word of my Lord, so injurious to the edification of Christians, so destructive to the souls of men.

My fifth observation is, that this distinction of inspiration is an ungodly attempt to explain away the

thing, and retain the word. In fact, not one of the divisions is inspiration, but the first. Direction is not inspiration, elevation is not inspiration, superintendency is not inspiration. Do not all the evangelical ministers of London claim these three? Do they not constantly pray for them? Do they not ask direction from God in their teaching? Are they not sometimes elevated above the power of nature? Do they not speak of divine superintendency in their places of worship? But were I to assert from this, that Mr Wilson pretends to be inspired, I would represent him as a fanatic; and my representation would be a calumny, not justified by his pretensions to divine *direction*, *elevation*, and *superintendency*. If then, the Scriptures are in many things the work of man merely *directed*, *elevated*, and *superintended* by God, it is a falsehood to say, that they are all inspired. Since then, the Scriptures assert, that they are all given by inspiration, he who asserts, that much of them is only the work of men, *directed*, *elevated*, and *superintended* by God, gives the lie to the Holy Spirit, and calumniates the Scriptures. This is a serious charge, and I charge it on Mr Wilson, and those writers who have used this wicked theory of inspiration. By this jesuitical artifice, we may both admit and deny any thing. We have nothing to do but in our explanation to subject the word to an analysis, not directed by its use, but by our own fancies, or the necessities of our system, and the work is accomplished.

My sixth observation is, that if this distinction of inspiration is true, the greatest part of the Bible is

not the word of God at all. When a pupil writes a theme by the direction of his teacher, with every help usually afforded; and when it is so corrected by the latter, that nothing remains but what is proper in his estimation, is it not still the pupil's production? Could it be said to be the composition, or the work of the teacher? No more can the Scriptures be called the word of God, according to this mischievous theory. A book might all be true, and good, and important, yet not be the book of God. To be God's book, it must be his, in matter and in words, in substance and in form.*

My seventh observation is, that the author seems to admit the dangerous position, that some things delivered by the inspired writers, may not belong to the revelation; and that speaking on subjects not of a religious nature, they may have erred. This blasphemy has been openly avowed by some writers, and Mr Wilson certainly avows it, as a last resource, in case of necessity, but does not actually in any instance avail himself of its aid. To shew that I am justified in ascribing this sentiment to him, I will quote his language, on which I found my charge. "How far the inspiration of the Scriptures extends to the most casual and remote allusions of an historical and philosophical kind, which affect in no way the doctrines or duties of religion, it is not, perhaps, difficult to determine." Does not this seem to betray a fear, that history and philosophy may detect something false in the Scriptures, for which the author good naturally provides, by supposing that such things do not af-

*Inconsistent
with an asser-
tion on the
7th page

fect the doctrines and duties of religion. God asserts most expressly, that "All Scripture is given 'by inspiration;" but history and philosophy may find some falsehoods in it. Mr Wilson, in this critical situation, most generously steps forward and excuses them, by alleging that they do not affect the doctrines or the duties of religion. Would Mr Wilson take it kindly, if any one should attempt a like apology for himself? Would a jury look on it as no invalidation of evidence, that the witness is proved to have uttered many falsehoods on his oath, though not bearing on the question at issue? Would they not utterly discredit his whole testimony, if they found a known falsehood in his evidence, even on the most unconnected matters that are usually brought forward in cross-examination? If God avows the whole Scriptures as his word, a falsehood as to any thing will affect the revelation. The Bible must not utter a philosophical lie, nor an historical lie, more than a religious lie. If it lies on one subject, who will believe it on another! If it lies as to earthly things, who will believe it about heavenly things? But Mr Wilson asserts, that "The claims of the sacred penmen to an unerring guidance, are, without exception, confined to the 'revelation itself.'" God's assertion of inspiration extends to every thing that can be called Scripture. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Even the sayings of wicked men and of devils are recorded by inspiration, as truly as the sayings of Christ himself. There is nothing in Scripture that does not belong to the revelation. What an infi-

*How will
Mr. Carson ex-
cuse the Bible
for saying
that the sun
rises and
sets?*

del invention is this, that suggests a distinction in the book of God, between things that belong to the revelation, and things that do not belong to it! If even our evangelical divines will except from inspiration some things under the denomination of history and philosophy, not affecting the religion; what may not be expected from the daring profaneness of those who hate the gospel, and are willing to carry the theory to its utmost limits? If Mr Wilson is allowed to charge an historical, or a philosophical falsehood on the penmen of Scripture, may not Dr Priestley be allowed to charge inconclusive reasoning on an epistle? The Bible then, it seems, is not all the word of God: ^x only so much of it deserves that title, as affects the doctrines and the duties of religion. This accounts very obviously for the conduct of some evangelical divines, with respect to the circulation of the Apocrypha intermingled with the Scriptures. If they have found that all the Scriptures do not themselves belong to the revelation of God, it is not surprising if they add a little more to them, to make them more palatable to the world.

But, observes Mr Wilson, "The Bible was not 'given us to make us poets, or orators, or historians, 'or natural philosophers.'" Very true, very true, but very silly. We must overlook the bad poetry and bad oratory of the Bible, if we find any of this description in it; and we have no reason to expect a complete history of human affairs, nor a system of natural philosophy. But, verily, if the Scriptures contained one rule of poetry or oratory, that rule must be a legitimate one, or the Bible is a for-

*x So says Mr
Carson him-
self; for he
says the letter
of Claudius
Ptolemy and
the advice of
Gamaliel
was not in-
spired - see
pages 71-153*

persons alone injured, "Poets &c. might think inaccurate, but Mr. C. says he is so good as to tell us what they would be likely to think of the following things, among others. That the sun rises and sets - That the stars are placed in the firmament simply to give light upon the earth - That a text cited by Matthew as from Jeremiah, ~~literally in Jeremiah and elsewhere~~ can be found ~~in Zechariah~~. And if it tells one historical untruth, it must forfeit its pretensions in every thing, seeing its pretensions extend to every thing in the book. The inspired writers may have been as ignorant of natural philosophy, as the most ignorant of British peasants, without affecting their inspiration. But, verily, if they have delivered one philosophical dogma, it must either be true, or the Scriptures as a whole are false. For my part, I am convinced that to look into the Scriptures for a system of philosophy, is utterly to degrade them. But it would degrade them much more, it would utterly blast their pretensions, to allege that they have attempted and failed. I must have the inspired writers cleared of the accusation of pledging themselves to a philosophical untruth, as well as to a religious untruth. If the Scriptures are not designed to command our faith on points of philosophy, they do not teach anything on the subject. How very derogatory then to the honour of inspiration, is the following conclusion:—"Many things which such persons," (namely poets, orators, historians, and natural philosophers,) "might think inaccurate, may consist with a complete religious inspiration." How can this be the case, Mr Wilson, when it is said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration?" This pledges God equally for every thing in the Bible. Mr Wilson's assertion gives the lie to God's declaration. God says "All Scripture is given by inspiration;" Mr Wilson says it is false,—only so much of the Scripture is given by inspiration, as belongs to the revelation. This blasphemous doctrine

giving the lie to God's declaration, I must even submit to the injurious imputation, till Mr. C. can teach me how to reconcile things absolutely incompatible. The more I examine this book the more imperative does the necessity appear for a system which, like that of Swedenborg, can reconcile all these apparent discrepancies and contradictions, and prove that Inspiration is indeed

and not merely words, which in some cases are inspired; but in others, according to the testimony of Mr. Carson himself, certainly are not so. — see pages 91-153. J. H. B.

CARSON denies this. He asserts that "Nothing which poets & bards consider inaccurate, can consist with complete religious inspiration."

But "poets &c" do consider several things in the Scripture, to be inaccurate. Therefore these things cannot consist with complete religious inspiration; and consequently The Scriptures are not a Complete Religious Inspiration.

teaches Christians to go through the Scriptures, separating what belongs to revelation from what does not belong to revelation, to distinguish what is true from what may be false. Could Satan broach a worse doctrine in the school of Christ? Impossible. It would not be so mischievous, if in the boldness of infidelity, he were to assert through his agents, that the Scriptures are not at all inspired. This would be too shocking. From this all Christians would start back with horror. But when, as an angel of light, he asserts through the pen of an evangelical minister, that some falsehoods in Scripture are not only consistent with the most complete religious inspiration, but that this is the strongest ground on which it is possible to vindicate inspiration, he is likely to infuse his poison into the soul of many simple and unwary disciples of Christ.

But in the very phraseology of this exceptionable sentiment, there is a management which, to say the least, does not savour of godly sincerity. *Such persons might think inaccurate.* Was the author ashamed in plain language to make the wicked assertion? His meaning must be that such things are really inaccurate. This is the only point of view in which the assertion is to his purpose. Why then does he falter? Does he think that this soft way of charging God with falsehood, will excuse the daringness of the crime? Was it caution, or was it conscience, that induced him to utter the horrible blasphemy, as the sentiment of others?

And what artifice appears in the association of falsehoods in history and philosophy, with critical

faults in poetry and oratory! Are errors in fact to be ranged with errors in rhetorick? Is it the same thing in morals to be a liar and a bad poet? Is the poetry, to which just taste has never made an exception, to be brought into question, merely for the sake of softening delinquencies as to truth?

The author next gives us a quotation from Bishop Horsey, that shews that this truly great scholar did not know well what to say on this subject. He admits, yet is unwilling to make the supposition. As usual, when a writer is in a cloud, he has parenthesis upon parenthesis, and says more than enough on things nothing to the purpose; while he still leaves the question as he found it. I shall give the extract:—"It is most certain," says Horsey, 'that a divine revelation—in other words, a discovery of some part of God's own knowledge made by God himself—must be perfectly free from all mixture of human ignorance and error, in the particular subject in which the discovery is made.' Well then, my good Bishop, must not this apply to the motion or rest of the earth, if it is really taught, as well as to the character of God? "The discovery may," he continues, "and unless the powers of the human mind were infinite, it cannot but be limited and partial, but as far as it extends, it must be accurate." All true, but all away from the mark. No man ever felt a difficulty on this point. This is not debated by either infidel or Christian; by either the friends of plenary inspiration, or the abettors of partial inspiration. "In whatever relates, therefore," he continues, "to religion, either

letter of Cl. Lysias - page 71 - and of Gamaliel - page 153, that St. Luke was not inspired in writing the Acts of the Apostles!! He says expressly "Gamaliel was not inspired" - "The letter of Cl. Lysias was not inspired" St. Luke however delivered both the letter **31** of one, and the advice of the others. Of course, according to Mr. C. his inspiration is a mere pretence!!

' in theory or practice, the knowledge of the sacred writers was infallible, or their inspiration was a mere pretence." And must not their inspiration be a mere pretence, if there is any thing delivered by them, which is not inspired; since they assert of all Scripture that it is given by inspiration? Where is the distinction to be found between religion, and things supposed not to be religious? *

* In the same chapter of the Bible where we find the distinction between things inspired, and things given by inspiration!! See page 71.

" Though I admit," continues the Bishop, " the possibility of an inspired teacher's error of opinion in subjects which he is not sent to teach." But is he not sent to teach every thing that he has taught? If he gives us a bad lesson in philosophy, it will condemn him, as well as if he had given us bad morality. If he was not sent to teach us philosophy, let him keep his philosophy to himself. There must be none of it in the Scriptures. But he in a parenthesis, gives us an irrefraggable reason for this; "(because inspiration is not omniscience, and some things there must be which it will leave untaught.)" This might be very much to the purpose, if the opponent was so very unreasonable as to insist that the Bible, to be an inspired book, must teach philosophy, yea, that a divine teacher must be omniscient, and leave nothing untaught. But of what use is it, with respect to the man who charges false philosophical dogmas, as taught by the Scriptures? There is a mighty difference between refusing to speak, and speaking a falsehood. It is, however, with great reluctance, that this learned bishop goes so far. For he adds, " yet I confess it appears to me no very probable supposition (and it is, as I conceive, a mere sup-

‘ position, not yet confirmed by any one clear in-
 ‘ stance,) that an inspired writer should be permitted,
 ‘ in his religious discourses, to affirm a false propo-
 ‘ sition on *any* subject, or in *any* history to misre-
 ‘ present a fact.” Here the bishop is almost,
 though not altogether, such as he should be. This
 indeed is a very important thing. But if the learn-
 ed writer had considered the matter in the view of
 the direct assertion of the inspiration of *all* Scrip-
 ture, there can be no doubt that he would have
 taken higher ground. If it is only a supposition,
 a supposition not demanded by any one clear in-
 stance, why should the wicked supposition be made?
 Especially since it is true, as the bishop adds,
 “Their language, too, notwithstanding the accommo-
 ‘ dation of it that might be expected for the sake of
 ‘ the vulgar, to the notions of the vulgar, is, I believe,
 ‘ far more accurate, more philosophically accurate in
 ‘ its allusions than is generally imagined.” Indeed
 the language referred to, can scarcely be called an
 accommodation to the prejudices of the vulgar, but is
 rather a speaking in the usual way of men, without
 excepting philosophers themselves. If the sun and
 the moon are said to have stood still in the time of
 Joshua, there is no philosophical sentiment express-
 ed, more than when the philosopher himself now
 speaks of the rising and the setting of the sun.
 There is not the smallest difficulty thrown on the
 subject from this quarter. It is only foolish divines
 who wish to have employment for their learn-
 ing and ingenuity, that contrive difficulties to be
 resolved by theoretical explanations. Mr Wilson

himself, after quoting the bishop's words, seems to feel a little contrition for his previous language, and makes a strong effort to reconcile his views with those of this luminary of his church. "Perhaps," says he, "it is therefore better, and more consistent ' with all the Scripture language, to say, that the ' inspiration of superintendence, reached even to ' the least circumstances and most casual allusions ' of the sacred writers, in the proportion which ' each bore to the revelation itself." There is a happy obscurity in this qualification, which, if it prevents us from using it to advantage, also serves to screen it from exposure. But if certain errors in Scripture are reconcilable with the doctrine of complete religious inspiration, how is it better to say the contrary? Are we on this subject to say and suppose whatever fits our theories? My way is to endeavour to find what the Scriptures say, and to this I make every human dogma to bend. I will not allow philosophy herself to prate on the things of God. She is august in her own territories, but let her die should she dare to invade the territories of revelation. On this holy ground her profane foot must not tread.

But after our author doubtfully consents, that inspiration may extend to the least circumstances, which, in his estimation, is more than is necessary, he gives two reasons for his opinion, which are almost as little satisfactory to me as unbelief itself. Why does Mr Wilson believe, that inspiration is thus extensive? Is it because the Scriptures themselves say so, which are the only authority on the

subject? No, truly; this is not the ground on which he rests the matter. His two reasons are, that philosophy has no objection to this view, and that practical uses may be derived from the slightest details, and most apparently indifferent circumstances. Now, there can be no doubt, that divine truth must be perfectly consistent with true knowledge of every kind, and must have some use; but it is equally true, that this is not a proper criterion for judging of the contents of Scripture. A thing may be consistent with all other knowledge, and may have practical uses, yet not be a part of divine revelation. Had I, then, no other reason for the inspiration of the passages referred to, I would not believe it. That Paul was inspired in directing Timothy to bring his cloak, I believe, because this is a part of Scripture, and the Scriptures inform me, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Mr Wilson believes Paul to be inspired in this direction, because he fancies it is not destitute of practical use. I believe it to have practical use, because it is the words of inspiration. If it is not inspired, because it is a part of Scripture, it is impossible to know that it is inspired; and it is mere fanaticism to deduce instruction from it.⁺ Even then, when Mr Wilson holds the truth on this subject, he does not hold it on its proper evidence; and, therefore, does not truly hold it at all. This, to some may appear a trifling consideration. But it is a thing, on every part of divine truth, of primary importance. We must believe God without a voucher. On hearing a traveller relate some

W. Haldane
(p. 110) has deduced
several practical
inferences from
this text.
It is very good
and useful they
are. But is there
any of them which
ought not have
been deduced in
the manner,
supposing that
instead of Paul,
Barnabas, or

Lyons, or Ignatius had been the writer? I think not. I suppose
these observations of W. Haldane may be taken as a specimen of
what Mr. Carson means by "inspired instruction suggested
us." See page 153.

wonderful fact, if we should hesitate to believe him, till some other gentleman should interpose the authority of his experience, would the narrator be satisfied with our credence? Would he not consider himself most grossly insulted? And is it not perfectly the same thing, when we believe the inspiration of the direction about the cloak and parchments, and the prescription to Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake, not because these are parts of Scripture, and that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" but because some evangelical divine can extract edification for us from these portions of the word of God? A passage may contain instruction, yet we may be unable to see it. Are we then to hesitate about its inspiration till we can find the looked for edification? Does not this warrant the denial of the most important truths of the gospel, when individuals cannot perceive their advantage? Does not this justify the Neologian in explaining away all the miracles of Christ? To rest the foundation of the inspiration of particular passages of Scripture, upon any other foundation, than that they are a part of Scripture, is in effect to overturn the inspiration of the whole Bible.

I am glad, however, that Mr Wilson can perceive several important instructions in those passages of Scripture, which have been perfectly barren in the estimation of some other evangelical theologians, strutting in awkward dignity with the staff and gown of the philosopher. Yes, some of these oracles of orthodoxy, to whom the religious world are accustomed to look up as almost the mouth of hea-

ven, have not been ashamed to avow the opinions that such passages as the above, are not the words of God. Such things as these are too unimportant, too destitute of interest, too little of a religious nature, to be the dictation of inspiration. Hence the theory that makes a distinction in the Scriptures between the things that belong to religion, and the things of another nature. Wretched ingenuity! if thou must be employed, go to the schools of philosophy, where thou wilt find kindred madmen; leave the word of God in an unadulterated state to the christian. How daring, how diabolically daring, to erect a standard to displace some parts of Scripture from the word of God? Who but God has a right to say, what is worthy of revelation?

Mr Wilson, like many other divines, assigns to philosophy, a dignity and an authority on this subject, which I cannot recognise. In her own province, she is an instructor most interesting and useful; but on the subject of revealed religion her prerogatives are very limited. No philosophical doctrine, or discovery in philosophy, can be admitted as testimony with respect to the claims of a religion pretending to an establishment on miracles, but that which is either self-evident, or is legitimately deduced from self-evident principles. Such a philosophy has a right to speak, and must be heard, on all subjects. But little, indeed, of that which is called philosophy is of this description. Romances assuming the name of philosophy, have spoken as umpires on the truth of the doctrines of

But true it is that Revelation requires not testimony from Philosophy. But if a philosophical fact contestably established seem to militate against a passage of Scripture, are we therefore to refuse credence to such facts? Is it of one kind, is it certainly, can it ever be opposed to the Truth of any other kind. Would not then, in such case be wiser, as well as more modest, to suspect—not the Truth of Revelation at our own understanding of that Truth on the point in question? and not at once to condemn poor Philosophy for heresy, as the fathers of the Holy Inquisition condemned Galileo.

revelation ; and unwary christians, either not knowing the limits of philosophical interference, or from an undue deference to the dignity of science, have tamely acquiesced in the assumed claims. As a matter of fact, no madmen have been so extravagant as pretended philosophers. The inmates of Bedlam are quite sane in comparison with the metaphysical lunatics, who, in the building of ingenious systems, have trampled upon all the laws of evidence, and all the fundamental principles of the human mind. And if the geological maniacs, who have indicated their paroxysms in the effusion of systems of the formation of the earth,[†] are at all to be paralleled, it is in the ingenious but frantic labours of those divines, who have employed themselves in theories about the manner of the formation of the word of God.

[†] The effusion of a thousand geological maniacs will not refute our well established geological fact.

“ ————— Ah ! foolish sage
 He could not trust the word of heaven,
 The light which from the Bible blazed—that lamp
 Which God threw from his palace down to earth,
 To guide his wandering children home—yet leaned
 His cautious faith on speculations wild,
 And visionary theories absurd,
 Compared with which the most erroneous flight
 That poet ever took when warmed with wine
 Was moderate conjecturing.”

POLLOK.

The phases of philosophy have been as changeable as those of the moon ; yet, in every age, the pulpit has generally conformed to the reigning systems of science, and has been made the echo of the schools.

Speculation assumes the place of axioms, and the Apostles of Jesus must bow to the successors of the Stagirite.

Even the real discoveries of science are not founded on evidence that will warrant them to dictate to the sense of revelation, even on the points in which they relate to the same subject. I am convinced, that the glory of God has been much displayed by the glasses of the astronomers. But if Moses and the telescope were at issue, I would trample on the glasses of the philosophers. I have more evidence that the Scriptures are the word of God, than ever can be produced for the truth even of the Newtonian system. This, I say, not from any opinion of interference, for I am persuaded there is none. The Scriptures are not pledged for or against this system. But the usual way of speaking on this subject, discovers too little respect for the word of God, and too much deference to the authority of philosophy. Mr Wilson does not seem free of this charge. "There is," says he, "nothing in them (the Scriptures) inconsistent with the facts and discoveries of history and philosophy." Very true, and so much the better for history and philosophy.† But is there any fact in history so well established as the history of Jesus? We would not be justified in condemning the Scriptures, though many things were found in history contrary to their accounts. Who has given to profane history the prerogative of credence, as often as it might differ from sacred history? It is much better that there is no such difference; but

seems rather
to lay so
as a charge
ish poor Mr
on for saying
and in the
-breath to
oplege that
he says is
true."

it is not right to acknowledge even in theory, that in a contested matter, the preference is to be given to the word of man. If the king and his prime minister make a contradictory assertion, I will believe his Majesty : Shall I then give less deference to my God? I shall never consent, that the Scriptures shall give the way in passing, to the arrogant systems of human philosophy.

There are, no doubt, errors on both sides. If some are willing to hold the Scripture from philosophy as their liege lord, others set too small a value on the testimony of that light which belongs to man by his constitution. Whatever is self-evident, ought to be accounted as a revelation from God; and consequently a revelation prior to that of the Scriptures. Any thing, therefore, that contradicts any of the fundamental principles of human nature, must be rejected, whatever its claims may be. A dogma at variance with any self-evident truth, cannot be contained in the Bible. The light of nature is a divine revelation, and no succeeding revelation can contradict it.

My eighth observation is, that little as this theory may profess to deduct from the full inspiration of Scripture; though in some instances the author reduces the distinction to a mere shadow; yet if there is really any thing in Scripture which is human in such a sense, that it is not also divine, the scheme as truly contradicts these passages of Scripture which assert inspiration, as the most lax system on this subject. If man had a part to perform in such a sense, that in it God had no share, which

is the only sense in which the distinction is to the author's purpose, so far the Scriptures are not the inspired word of God. They are not wholly by inspiration, which as truly contradicts the assertion that "all Scripture is given by inspiration," as the doctrine that inspiration extends to a few general objects only. Why do we believe that the Scriptures are inspired? Because they assert this. If then we are justified in making any exception from this, we are equally justified in making any number of exceptions. This theory then, though it makes a distinction which the author sometimes represents to be so fine, that it is difficult or impossible to perceive it, in reality subverts inspiration.

My ninth observation is, that this theory is destitute of foundation, even according to the author's own explanations. He teaches, that though the writers of Scripture made use of their own knowledge, their own information, &c. &c. yet, that in the use of those they were directed, or superintended by God, so that the thing written may in his view, be said to be inspired. Now admitting this, for the sake of argument, why may not the human manner be equally directed, and superintended, and elevated; so that it may also be said to be divine? Is the manner more human than, according to the author, much of the matter? If then the human matter, may be called the word of God, because of God's direction or superintendency, why may not the human manner be called God's in a like sense? May not the form be inspired in the sense of direction or superintendence, as well as the things

which are said to have this kind of inspiration? If so, why is the manner said to be exclusively human, more than much of the matter, which according to the author himself, is equally human? The author himself then has taken away the foundation from his own theory.

My tenth observation is, that this theory has not the redeeming circumstance in it, that the most lax systems of inspiration possess, namely, an adaptation to answer objections. It does not remove a single difficulty, that is supposed to press on complete verbal inspiration. It cannot be of the smallest service in forming a harmony of the gospels. If all the matter of the Scriptures is God's, the humanity of the mere manner cannot reconcile the smallest seeming contradiction. Some theorists may plead, that their systems are demanded by the necessities of the case, but this theory sins without this temptation. Its advantages are merely in the fancy of its author. But the author's pretensions on this head, we shall afterwards have an opportunity of more fully examining.

My eleventh observation is, that though there is a distinction between the matter and manner of a book, yet there is no distinction between the author of a book, and the author of the style, or manner of a book. He that is the author of a book, must be the author of the style of the book. Now God is said to be the author of the Bible, not merely the author of the matter of the Bible. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." It is the Scripture then that is given by inspiration, and this word contains the manner as well as the matter; the words as well as the

thoughts. A writing includes thought, words, style; and as all the holy writings are expressly declared to be inspired, they must be inspired in thoughts, words, style.* One man may suggest the thoughts contained in any composition, and another may express them in his own manner; but we never say, that one man is the author of a writing or composition, and another the author of the style of the composition, for the word writing or composition includes the style. Were any piece of writing produced in a civil court, as the production of a certain person, how ridiculous would be an attempt to prove that another was the author of the style of it. It might indeed be written in the style of another, that is, in the same kind of style which another uses, but the author of the writing must be the author of the style. Just so with the Scriptures. They are written by the inspiration of God, but that inspiration has conformed itself to the variety of styles used by the writers of Scripture. To say, that the Scriptures are the work of God, but their style the work of man, is the same thing as to contend that the expression *God made man*, admits the supposition, that the devil formed him. The word *Scripture*, as expressly includes style, as the word *made* includes formation.

The same thing is evident from other designations of the Scripture. The phrase *word of God*, implies that the Scriptures are God's, in both matter and expression. The word *λογος** denotes not only a word, but a connection of words, expressing a thought, or a whole speech, oration, or treatise.

* See Appendix.

It is very variously used, but whether it is employed to denote a word, a sentence, or a speech, it always includes style. Indeed it is distinguished by Demosthenes from *ῥήματα*, signifying a single word. In his oration for the crown, he says of Æschines, *συνειλεχώς ῥήματα καὶ λόγους*, translated by Dr Leland, *his words and periods are prepared*. If then the whole Scriptures are called the *word of God*, they must be his in words, as well as in matter, in style as well as in sentiment. ×

The same thing appears from the designation *oracles of God*. Among the heathens, the word oracle denoted the response given by the god, who was consulted through his priest. This answer was supposed to come from the god, both in matter and form. The priestess of Apollo at Delphi was in a phrenzy, whilst she uttered the words inspired by her god. In general, the heathen prophets were fitted for being channels of communicating the divine declarations by previous derangement. It was then undoubtedly understood, that the inspiring deity was the author of the words and style, as well as of the substance of the communication. The Scriptures then are said to be the *oracles of God*, and Stephen says, that Moses *received the lively oracles*. If so, he received the whole that he wrote. Indeed, Mr Wilson admits what refutes himself. "The prophetic parts," he says, "the doctrines of pure revelation, the historical facts beyond the reach of human knowledge; all the great outlines of Christianity, both as to matter, doctrine, and practice, were probably of the inspiration of sug-

"That every word
of Scripture
has been in-
spired does not
imply that every
speech or sen-
timent recor-
ded there shows
he inspired."
Carson, pag.

‘gestion, both as to the matter and the words,” 507. If so, the style in all such cases is God’s, the manner as well as the matter. For if all the words are given by God, how can the style be abstracted from this? Indeed, in prophecy not understood by the writer, the words and the collocation of the words, needed inspiration as much as the matter. The Scriptures then, soul, body, and spirit, are the word of God.

This is certainly tolerably applicable to Mr. Carson's answer also.

My last observation is, that Mr Wilson’s system is crude and indigested, and fertile in contradictions above any other theory.* It does not hang together, but obliges him to harmonise its discordant parts by saying and unsaying, in the most extravagant manner. The theory essentially consists in supposing that in the making of the Scriptures, God is the author of one part, and man of another. The matter being divine and the form human; yet he frequently asserts that the whole is divine, and the whole human. Now the ingenuity of Satan could not reconcile this on Mr Wilson’s plan. A thing may be both divine and human in different points of view, but in the same point of view this is impossible. Now to say that the Scriptures are divine and human in different points of view, is nothing to Mr Wilson’s purpose. In this sense, the matter may be said to be human as well as the form. The thoughts are as truly Paul’s thoughts in his Epistles, as the language and style are Paul’s. In a like sense also, the manner, though human, is likewise divine. God speaks through Paul in Paul’s manner. But Mr Wilson’s theory makes the matter

solely God's, and the manner or form solely man's. If so, every thing is not divine, every thing is not human; but the Scriptures are partly human and partly divine. Mr Wilson then palpably contradicts himself, when he says, that every thing is divine, for according to him the manner of Scripture is not divine; and when he says that every thing is human, for according to his distinction, the matter can in no sense be human.

Of the writers of Scripture, he says, "They 'plead with those to whom they are sent, they address the heart, they expostulate, they reason, they invite.'" Now this is a portion of the phenomena that belongs to man. But his theory requires that nothing belongs to man but the manner. Is there no matter then in the Scripture pleadings, addresses to the heart, expostulations, warnings, invitations? Are these all shadows without substance? Does not this admit that there is a sense in which the matter is man's as well as the manner? An apostle writes his own thoughts as well as in his own style; that is, God speaks through the thoughts and style of the apostle.

The facts of the case, he says, imply, "simply 'that God was pleased to use man as his instrument,'" 502. This is perfectly correct, but perfectly contradictory to the author's theory. According to it, God does not make use of the instrumentality of man, but leaves a part of his work to the distinct agency of man, in which man acts as independently of God, as in his own part God acts independently of man.⁷ If in the manner or

and a sad proof indeed of the most substantial ground for it, a shameful libel, and a sad proof indeed of the want of that charity which begetteth all things.

Carson in his zeal certainly overstept the bounds of charity. If he literally
on what he here says, it is very little better than accusing Mr. Wilson of
icism. I have never seen more of Mr. W's work than is here quoted, nor can
or believe it. I see it there, that he can either by expression or implication

form of revelation, man is only the rational instrument through whom God acts, then the theory of Mr Wilson is destroyed. Accordingly, though the author speaks thus in repelling objections, and endeavours to hide the hideousness of the system that would rob God of any part of his own word, yet he speaks another language when he exhibits his system. Instead of using the writers of Scripture as instruments, God, according to the author, "thought it right *to leave* them to the operations of their own minds, and the dictates of their own knowledge, habits, and feelings, as to the manner of communicating his will," 501. In like manner, he quotes Warburton, who asserts "that the Divine superintendence was with *so suspended a hand* as permitted the use, and *left* them to the guidance of their own faculties, while they kept clear of error." Here there is no instrumentality. The nurse watches the child stepping across the floor, and as long as it does not stumble, puts not a hand to the little adventurer. In such cases then, not only the manner but the matter also is no more God's, than the child's walking is the nurse's walking. It is then absurd and contradictory for Mr Wilson to assert distinct and independent provinces to God and man in the compositions of the bible, yet when it suits his view to speak of mere instrumentality on the part of man.

In another place, speaking of the Books of Scripture, he says, "They are the words of the Holy Ghost." This is all I ask, and less I will

not take. But how has the author the hardihood to make such an assertion, according to his views? Does he believe that all the words of all parts of Scripture are the words of the Holy Spirit? His language can have no lower import. Yet, does he not himself expressly distinguish between certain things that needed suggestion, and certain other things that needed less.[†] Some things needed only the eye of the nurse. I ask Mr Wilson also, if all the words of Scripture are the words of the Holy Ghost, how it is that the style or manner of the Scripture is not the work of the Holy Ghost.

The author likewise speaks of "the wonderful union of Divine and human agency in the inspiration of the Scriptures." Is human agency a component integral part of inspiration? This makes man the author of a part in the composition of the bible, as distinct from God; yet it absurdly makes that part that belongs to man only a part of inspiration. This is a crude theory Mr Wilson. A very slight cross-examination makes the witness refute himself. Again, in one place he says: "The Books are given by Divine inspiration," 499; in another, he says, "Where nature ended and inspiration began, it is not for man to say," 506. In the first, all is asserted to be inspiration; in the second, it is taken for granted, that part is inspiration, and part the work of man, though it is impossible to assign the boundary. If the Scriptures contained such contradictions, it would be impossible to defend their inspiration.

is made up of words is not inspired. Every the smallest part is inspired; yet some aggregations of these smallest parts are not inspired but only recorded by inspiration. — How miserably defective and inconsistent are all these views of inspiration where there is a want of the internal spirit!

* Does not Mr. Carson himself distinguish between some things inspired and others only recorded by inspiration? Does he not expressly say (page 43, and many other places to the same point) that the scriptures may be God's "in-words" as well as in matter in style as in substance? And does he not again say (p. 71) "that every word of Scripture has been inspired does not imply that every sentence or sentiment recorded there should be inspired?" where can be a greater contradiction than that every word inspired; yet every speech such merit.

Let us now take a glance of the author's view of the advantages of his theory. "By this condescension of God," says he, "in his manner of inspiring the Scriptures, truth is made more intelligible to the mass of mankind, than if the human faculties had been altogether suspended, and the feelings of common life extinguished or overborne." 514.

Is it peculiar to our author's system to view the faculties of the writers of Scripture as active? Does any system deny it? I can admit this, and I do admit it, as fully as the author, while I contend that God speaks through the activity of the human faculties. I go farther than the author's distinction can consistently allow him. I can speak of Paul's thoughts, reasonings, arguments, &c. as well as of Paul's style. Why then does Mr Wilson make such a claim for his theory, when the advantage he would appropriate to it, is common to all? But in reality, it is an advantage that exists merely in Mr Wilson's fancy. The Scriptures might have been equally intelligible, and had it pleased God much more so, had the Scriptures been written by man through an inspiration that actually suspended all the rational faculties—nay, though they had been uttered by a statue, or written by a machine. Nothing can be more unfounded than the train of consequences which the author draws from the supposition of the Scriptures being written by an inspiration which should have suspended all the operations of the writer's mind. This, he says, "Must have spread an uniformity and sameness over the whole surface of the Scriptures." Why so, Mr Wilson? It

is equally easy to assert, and equally easy to prove, that there is no *must* in the case. Could not the same Almighty author have given the very same manner, with every variety of style, though man had been as unconscious as a block of marble, when he wrote them? “Must have expunged,” continues our author, “all the varieties of style, diversities of narrative, and selection of topics—must have impressed one and the same phraseology, and turn of expression upon all the sacred books in the same language.” 519. There is not a *must* in any one of these particulars. Had God declined the instrumentality of man altogether in the writing of the Scriptures, would he not still have written in the language and style of man? Such writers as Mr Wilson, seem strangely to take it for granted, that if God had communicated the Scriptures without man, he would not have used the language of man. In their odd suppositions, they sometimes speak of the language of angels, as if that would be a revelation to man. I suppose the Ten Commandments are as intelligible as any part of the Scriptures, yet they were written by the finger of God, without any instrumentality of man. This then puts it beyond speculation, what the Scriptures would have been, even had there been no human instrumentality in them. This fact should have guarded Mr Wilson from indulging in such a train of romantic speculation.

The second advantage of inspiration as explained by this theory is, “The interpretation of Scripture is rendered more easy, as well as more safe.”

Now this is an advantage which I cannot at all admit. On the contrary, there can be no doubt but without any human instrumentality, God might have rendered the Scriptures much more easily interpreted, and have freed them from all those apparent contradictions, and all those real difficulties and obscurities which it is generally acknowledged that they contain. The Scriptures have exactly that degree of clearness which the divine wisdom saw fit, and this he could have given them in whatever way he might have chosen to convey them. Let us, however, take a look at the reasons by which the author supports his position. "It depends not," he says, "on the turn of any one particular phrase, or the force of some few words, but springs from the general import of language familiar to us all." And had God given the Scriptures without human instrumentality, would it have been otherwise? Would more, in that issue, have depended on the turn of one particular phrase, or the force of some few words? Would less attention have been paid to the general import of language, or would the speech of heaven have been employed? Why does the author speak of language familiar to us all? As every nation has not the words of inspiration, he must mean human language, as distinguished from language not human. There seems to be a strange confusion in the author's mind on this subject. He seems to think that if the Scriptures had not been written through the instrumentality of man, they would not have been written in human language. Does he think that the

Scriptures would be a revelation at all, if they were not written in human language? Whether they might have been written by the finger of God, or by angels, they must equally have been written in the language of man. Has the author forgotten the Ten Commandments, and the various messages delivered to men by angels? What occasion had he to go to heaven for a language, as an alternative of the mode of communicating revelation? What reason had he to think that the language of God without a medium, or through the medium of angels, would have shunned the same mode of interpretation with the language of man?

“The Bible,” he says, “is to be studied, its various parts compared, its metaphors illustrated, its poetical and historical allusions unfolded, all its declarations received, according to the well-known rules of human writing.” And would not the Bible be studied, though God had written it by the instrumentality of angels, or without instrumentality altogether? Does the author never study the Ten Commandments? Why might not the various parts of the Bible have been compared on any mode of inspiration? Is there any difference in the illustration of a metaphor, whether it has been pronounced by God immediately, or by man as God’s rational organ? Would it be profane to exhibit the meaning and beauty of a metaphor as coming from God without a medium, yet lawful to make free with it coming through the medium of man? Perhaps this is the true reason why divines so earnestly labour to give God as little share

in the Scriptures as possible, and why they are so very bold in their manner of interpreting the word of God. They seem to think that the Bible is God's word, in a like sense as the speech delivered to parliament from the throne, is the king's speech; and treat it with similar rudeness and freedom. *

Some of these
views of Mr.
Wilson are cer-
tainly suffi-
ciently silly.

Does Mr Wilson know of any view of inspiration that prevents the unfolding of poetical and historical allusions? Have not such allusions equal need of being unfolded on all modes of inspiration? Must not the declarations of the Bible be received, according to the well known rules of human writing, in whatever mode it has been inspired? Does the author really think that the Ten Commandments, and every other communication immediately from God, are not to be received according to the well-known rules of human writing? It is a wild and extravagant conceit, that the communications of God delivered immediately by himself to man, cannot be in the language of man; or, if in the language of man, cannot have their meaning ascertained by the known laws of human language. Should God speak to me from the throne of heaven, I would ascertain his meaning by the laws of human language, as well as when he speaks to me by Peter and Paul, Luke and John.

While the author provides work for the critic by his mode of inspiration, the unlearned Christian is kept in good humour by putting him on a level with the greatest scholars, with respect to knowledge of the great doctrines of Christianity. "The most 'unlearned Christian,'" says he, "stands upon

‘ the same ground, as to all the commanding truths
 ‘ of revelation, with the greatest scholars; whilst
 ‘ the utmost diligence of the scholar will find em-
 ‘ ployment in the adaptation of his acquisitions to
 ‘ the illustration of the more difficult parts of the
 ‘ inspired volume.” Now this is a compliment to
 the want of learning in which I cannot coincide. It
 is mere fanaticism. Indeed God often reveals him-
 self to babes, while he hides himself from the wise
 and prudent; and many unlearned men have a
 much deeper and more correct knowledge of divine
 truth, than many learned Christians. Still I con-
 tend, that learning is of equal importance with re-
 spect to the exhibition, proof, and illustration of
 the commanding truths of revelation, as it is in that
 province which Mr Wilson exclusively assigns to it.
 There is no subject in revelation in which it is not
 profitable. There is no greater bar to progress in
 the knowledge of God, than the supposition that
 all who believe in Jesus Christ are equally ac-
 quainted with the Gospel. If all parts of Scripture
 deserve to be studied, this does so above all. And
 nothing will so well repay study. What a wonder-
 ful difference as to degrees of knowledge, between
 the simpleton saved by faith, and the Christian
 who, from his long and deep acquaintance with the
 Gospel, views it as a self-evident truth; having in
 itself its own evidence as much as the divine exist-
 ence itself! Learning can in nothing be so well
 employed as on the great truths of the Gospel.
 There is indeed no room for speculation or theory,
 improvement or alteration; but all the learning in

the universe might be employed in exhibiting the inexhaustible treasures of truth.

The third advantage which the author finds in his system of inspiration is, that “ By this plan, the
 ‘ trifling inaccuracies which have insinuated them-
 ‘ selves into the copies of the Scriptures, by the
 ‘ carelessness of transcribers, the various readings
 ‘ which have accumulated during eighteen centu-
 ‘ ries, and the further defects arising from transla-
 ‘ tions, or from our ignorance of a few particular
 ‘ allusions, are of less moment.” Now, I cannot divine in what way these defects can be either increased or diminished by any mode of inspiration. I know indeed that the mode of treating divine truth employed by the Scriptures, interspersing the same doctrine in innumerable places, certainly does lessen the evil of various readings. But I know equally well that this does not belong to the subject of the mode of inspiration, and that this advantage might have been effected, had the Scriptures been written every word by the finger of God. If the author has an eye to this, he very unphilosophically confounds things as distinct as things can be. But let us hear himself in the illustration of this advantage. “ They do not materially impair the force
 ‘ of the divine books, because those books are writ-
 ‘ ten by men like ourselves.” Would the above defects have more materially impaired the force of the divine books, had they been written by angels, or by the finger of God? Would a various reading, or an imperfect translation, have a worse effect upon the Ten Commandments written by the finger of

God, or upon the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ, than upon any of the Letters of Paul? In whatever way the Scriptures may be supposed to be inspired, the loss to the reader from the above defects is perfectly the same. Can any man, of sobriety of mind, suppose that if God had written every letter of the Scriptures without instrumentality, he was more interested to preserve the Sacred Volume from the errors of transcribers, than he is on the plan employed by him? Yet our author asserts it as an axiom, that if the Scriptures had been given by an inspiration which should have suspended all the operations of the writer's mind; it "must have required the perfectly pure preservation of all the copies in all ages from the errors of transcribers,—must have rendered various readings and imperfect translations of fundamental injury." These assertions seem to be so entirely without even plausibility, that I am at a loss to conceive how they can have influence on any intellect. On the contrary, it appears to me an axiom, that the same various readings and imperfect translations will equally injure the book, whatever be the mode of inspiration. Would an imperfect translation, or a various reading, do more injury to the Ten Commandments, than to the Third Epistle of John? But by what sort of juggling is it, that the author contrives to preserve the books considered as divine, when they are injured as human? If a word is lost, is no matter lost? Does he not say, that the matter is all divine? Words then that may be lost certainly

must contain no matter. The loss of words is only the loss of manner! How fond our author is of mysteries and paradoxes! The force of the divine books is not impaired by any casualty, because these divine books were written by men! Then, it seems, if all the Scriptures which have been written by men had been lost, all that is divine in them would still remain! Is not this a sort of spiritual legerdemain?

In the continuation of his illustration of this advantage, the author observes, "The truths are not 'conveyed dryly and systematically, but clothed 'with human feelings,' &c. Had God written all the Bible with his own finger, must it have been a dry systematic work? Surely this has no relation to the subject of inspiration. It is a peculiarity and an advantage belonging to the plan of revelation, but with the subject of the mode of inspiration it has no more concern than it has with the genealogy of Melchisedec.

The fourth advantage which the author ascribes to his view of this subject, is, that the sacred books on this plan become capable of supplying proofs of authenticity. This is a sound observation. Had the Scriptures been written, either by God immediately, or through angels, we would have wanted those proofs of authenticity, that result from the characteristic style of each of the inspired writers. But the views of those who consider the various styles as also the work of God, as well as of man, possesses this advantage equally. When Sir Walter Scott writes in the style of any of his fictitious

characters, it is still the style of Sir Walter. The same may be said of other internal evidences, to which Mr Wilson's fifth advantage refers.

His sixth advantage also is real, and the illustration of it quite satisfactory. It will be of great advantage to read the Scriptures with this observation constantly in view, for it is exemplified in innumerable particulars. The Scriptures, he observes, are thus more adapted to be a moral probation of the heart. It might not be unprofitable to the author, to consider whether his observations may not apply to his own theory. The traces of the characteristic style of the fishermen of Galilee, may afford an occasion to worldly wisdom to invent a theory, founded on an arbitrary distinction, instead of submitting, like a little child, to believe the testimony of God on this question, asserting that "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God." Surely there is nothing in Scripture which asserts, that the manner of Scripture is not as truly divine as the matter.

I am glad to find, that the author, in the first of his practical reflections, so decidedly condemns that wicked theory that some have lately brought forward, that daringly ventures to divest of inspiration some things in Scripture, as too trifling, and of too worldly a nature to deserve that honour. Such arrogance, assuming to sit in judgment on the word of Jehovah, instead of seeking instruction from every part of it, cannot be too severely reprobated. "The moment man dares to consider any part of 'Scripture as uninspired,'" says Mr Wilson, "he

‘ sets up his own prejudices as the rule of judgment; he believes only what he likes; and he commonly ends in undervaluing or rejecting some of the fundamental truths of the gospel.” I would have had much greater pleasure in reviewing Mr Wilson’s work, had he written the whole in a strain worthy of this observation.

The author’s second reflection is, that his theory “ tends to close the avenues to some of the most pernicious evils which have desolated the church.” He divides these errors into two classes; the first takes too low a view of inspiration, and the second, too high a view. The usurpation over conscience, the authority of tradition, infallibility, the prohibition of the free use of the Bible to the laity, the exclusive imposition of a particular translation, and the intermixture of Apocryphal with Canonical writings, are all ascribed to the first. Now there can be no doubt, that the abettors of these errors have little practical regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures; but there can be as little doubt, that they do not arise from a denial of plenary inspiration. On the contrary, the Church of Rome will admit the inspiration of the Scriptures more fully than Mr Wilson himself. It will ascribe them to God, both in matter and manner. It admits the Apocrypha, not because it makes light of the inspiration of the genuine books of Scripture, but because it believes the Apocrypha to be inspired. It imposes an exclusive translation; not because it believes the original to be uninspired, or inspired in a low degree, but because it believes the Vulgate

to be an inspired translation. I wish Mr Wilson was engaged in actual combat with any Roman Catholic writer. He would soon be convinced, that he was here writing at random. There is no more reason to ascribe Popish errors to imperfect views of inspiration, than there is to ascribe all error to this source.

But it is more to my purpose to attend to the errors supposed to result from an overstrained view of inspiration. "On the other hand," says Mr Wilson, "the class of errors, not generally so fatal, but yet most injurious, which spring from a forgetfulness of the human character, and form of the plan of inspiration, is to be guarded against." Now, reader, put your invention on duty, and try to find out a number of such errors—errors whose origin is the overlooking of the manner of inspiration. "If the inspiration of Scripture," says the author, "be so interpreted as to supersede the free and natural flow of the writer's mind." Is there any one who holds this? and if there is, does it lead to the supposed consequence? Cannot God convey his thoughts and his words, through the natural flow of the thoughts and words of him through whom he speaks? "If sound and reasonable means of expounding the force of terms," says he, "the import of metaphors, the signification of allusions to local customs be discarded." Do any of those who have the highest views of inspiration, discard sound and reasonable means of expounding the force of terms, the import of metaphors, &c.? Or has their view any tendency to

countenance such extravagancies? Mr Wilson might as plausibly trace such evils to overstrained corollaries from the 47th proposition of the first book of Euclid's Elements. Why, Mr Wilson, do you talk so much at random? This loose reasoning has no more connection with the principles on which it is professedly founded, than it has with theories of the formation of the earth. "If the 'book,'" continues Mr Wilson, "is considered as 'so divine in its form, as well as its matter, as to 'exclude man's agency.'" Did any man ever hold this? Did ever Mr Wilson hear of any one who denied the agency of man in writing the Bible? Especially do they on whom he has his eye, deny the employment of man as a rational organ in the writing of the Scriptures? They believe indeed, that the Bible is as divine in its form, as in its matter, and as human in its matter, as in its form. But both as to matter and form, man was a rational organ in producing it. "If the human character of 'the manner,'" says he, "is forgotten—the errors 'which may arise, are by no means inconsiderable.'" Who can forget that the Scriptures are written in the form of human writings? This may be remembered, while at the same time, it is believed that they have received this human form from God. But that we may not fight in the dark, let us see what those errors are. "Truth is conveyed off, as 'it were, into the lifeless reservoirs of human contrivance, instead of flowing fresh from the living 'sources of the divine mind.'" Now a Scripture metaphor I could expound, but here is one that

discards the efforts of criticism. I can attach no more meaning to it, than if it were written in Chinese. Let us then examine the next supposed error. "Harsh and unnatural interpretations are 'imposed; arguments are violated, or misstated; figures and parables are pushed into minute and 'far fetched novelties.'" How do any of these evils result from the belief that God is the author of the Scriptures, both as to manner and matter? Does the author really think, that it would be lawful to impose harsh and unnatural interpretations, violate or misstate arguments, push figures and parables into minute and far fetched novelties, on the supposition that God had written the Scriptures with his own finger? Is there any difference as to the interpretation of a parable or any figure, whether it had been written by God or by man? The author seems constantly to labour under the strange impression, that if God should speak without human instrumentality, he would not speak in language to be expounded by the ordinary laws of speech. "Systems of theology," he continues, "are framed according to the taste and habits of the student, and not after the native simplicity of the 'divine word.'" Many systems of theology, it is true, are of this stamp, but it is not the result of too high views of inspiration. Strange indeed, that a writer takes up his pen, with the conviction that the Scriptures are so eminently inspired, and that this very conviction leads him to form his system in utter disregard of these Scriptures! "A few 'passages are taken out of their connexion, and

‘ forced to an unnatural sense, and then the Scrip-
 ‘ tures compelled to bend to that exposition.”
 Very bad indeed, but overstrained views of inspi-
 ration are surely the last thing in which a source
 should be sought for such an evil. “ The various
 ‘ statements and arguments of the Holy Scrip-
 ‘ tures, instead of being diligently examined and
 ‘ compared, as so many phenomena, from which
 ‘ inferences are to be drawn with the care of the
 ‘ inductive philosophy—are harshly put together,
 ‘ reduced to a few rigid and unbending proposi-
 ‘ tions, and are made the first principles of all sub-
 ‘ sequent advances. By these means, the doc-
 ‘ trine of the inspiration is overstrained, and mis-
 ‘ applied.” How is it possible that any reasoning
 mind could connect such errors with the opinion on
 which Mr W. supposes them to be founded? This
 surely is a noble instance of the inductive philoso-
 phy. The wildest enthusiasm in all its phrenzy,
 never uttered any thing more extravagant than
 this. A series of errors are ascribed to an origin
 with no more semblance of truth, than if they were
 deduced from wrong views of the solar system.
 Though a person should be so frantic as to believe
 that the writers of the Scriptures were unconscious
 organs, as devoid of understanding at the moment,
 as Balaam’s ass, his opinion would have no tend-
 ency to lead to any of the above errors. It is mere
 raving then to trace them to such a source. No
 man can be more destitute of a philosophic mind,
 than this writer.

“ The human part is forgotten. Men pass over
 ‘ and obliterate all the finer traits, all the hidden
 ‘ and gentle whispers of truth, all the less obvious,
 ‘ and yet natural and affecting impressions of character.” Here again the writer gets into mystery. What are these finer traits, that are passed over and obliterated? How are they obliterated, if they are passed over? What are hidden whispers of truth? Who can hide a whisper? If it is hidden, how is it obliterated? Do not the gentle whispers of truth belong to the matter of Scripture? Are *they* manner merely; form without substance? What in plain English is the meaning of this sentence? Does the author really think that any one reads the Epistles of Paul, or Peter, James, or John, without knowing that man is speaking as well as God? Does he think that it is possible to overlook the human agency, while he is addressed by a writer expressly under his own name? Whatever probability there may be that some will forget that God speaks through man, there is none that they will forget that man speaks when he writes expressly with his own signature. The agency of man is not a fine trait, not a gentle whisper, not a less obvious impression; but the most prominent feature in revelation. He must be blind indeed, who does not see the Apostle Paul in his writings. Has ever the author met any species of two-legged animals, who are guilty of the errors which he here exposes? Yet the author speaks as if there was a very numerous class of this description. If it were the theme of a school-

boy torturing his barren brains to fill up a page or two, such a creation of fancied evils might find some apology. But on so grave a subject, it is utterly without excuse. There cannot exist an individual, who in reading the Scriptures, overlooks the agency of man. Is it then consistent with integrity, to create a class of fanatics so extravagantly frantic, for the mere purpose of disgracing a disagreeable sentiment?

And what connexion has the quotation from Lord Bacon with this subject? As much as it has with the theory of the tides. Lord Bacon prefers short, sound, judicious notes and observations on Scripture, to those commentaries that abound in common places, pursue controversies, and are reduced to artificial method. Well, what has this to say on the subject of inspiration? His Lordship illustrates his meaning by a figure. The wine that flows from the first treading of the grape, is sweeter and better than that forced out by the press. Whatever propriety of application this beautiful figure has to the subject, which it is brought to illustrate, it can have no application to Mr Wilson's purpose. Certainly it was not from a gentle *crush* of the Scriptures, that the author's theory of inspiration flowed. All the power of the *press* could not force it out of the words, "All Scripture is given by the 'inspiration of God,'" nor from any other words in the Bible. It is not merely the roughness of the husk and the stone that we find in this wine: We complain, that it is a wretched beverage produced by pouring water on the lees.

REMARKS ON THE REVIEW

OF THE

REV. DANIEL WILSON'S THEORY OF INSPIRATION,

IN THE

Christian Observer of October 1829.

It is fortunate for Mr Wilson, that all reviewers are not of my way of thinking on these matters. Some of them, will, no doubt, consider him as carrying his ideas of inspiration much too far. Even some who have professed evangelical sentiments have made much greater havoc on the Scriptures. The most rigidly orthodox reviewers, it seems, are quite satisfied with his views. The evangelical press of England, I have no doubt, will be on his side. The *Christian Observer* appears to consider itself as very scrupulous on the subject, yet it professes a substantial concurrence in his doctrine. It will be but justice then to Mr Wilson to exhibit the judgment of this Review, by the side of my remarks. I have no wish to conceal any thing that may be

supposed to throw light upon a point which I deem so vitally important.

The Christian Observer's account of Mr Wilson's theory, is contained in the following extract. "The next Lecture introduces us to a subject of much difficulty; namely, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, leaving no defect or error in the religious revelation; and the human form, the mould, the peculiar character, the natural methods of expression; the poetry, the history, the devotion,—in short, the whole apparatus of earthly instrumentality, all impressed with the stamp of man, all intelligible to man, all to be interpreted by the laws of ordinary sense, and constantly applied by grammatical, logical and historical rules. Mr Wilson considers the matter all divine—the manner all human; that is, with a constant preservation from all error affecting the revelation. He views the Bible as God speaking to man, not by angels, nor in the language, nor with the ideas, associations, and style of angels, if angels have such characteristics—but by man, in the language of man, and with the ideas, associations, and style of man."

Though the first sentence is not remarkable for its clearness and precision, this extract will shew that I have not misrepresented Mr Wilson's meaning. My view of it is substantially the same with that given here. The Scriptures are impressed with the stamp of man, that is, they are written as if each of the writers were communicating his own thoughts. Did any man ever doubt this? Is this

a discovery? Was there ever a reader of the Scriptures who was so ignorant as not to know this? But have not the thoughts, reasoning, and arguments the same impression? Could not God as easily use the respective style of the writers of revelation, as he has used their thoughts, reasoning, and arguments? Has he not communicated his truth and will to us, through the thoughts, reasoning, and arguments of the inspired writers, as well as through their style? The Epistle to the Romans, or to the Galatians, &c. is as much Paul's matter, as Paul's manner. Both are his in one sense; both are God's in another. The style is the style of Paul, but could not God use that style when he wrote by Paul? The thoughts also are Paul's thoughts; but could not God convey his mind in the way of Paul's thinking and reasoning? If these gentlemen possessed a little philosophical perspicacity, they would perceive that there is no difference in this matter, between the thoughts and the style; both equally possessing the marks of the mind of man. There is no more reason from this human impression, to conclude that the manner was without God as to the style, than as to the matter.

X This is true of the Epistles, but the same cannot be said of the prophecies.

But not only has every thing in Scripture, according to these writers, the stamp of man, but what must be equally surprising, "all is intelligible to man." Now is this a peculiarity in the manner of inspiration? What childish trifling? Must not revelation have been intelligible to man in whatever way inspired? In whatever way com-

municated? Had God given it by angels, would it not have been intelligible? Had he given it immediately from his own hand, would it not have been intelligible? What peculiar darkness is in the messages delivered by angels? Have these gentlemen ever read the Ten Commandments? Is not the language of the tables of the law sufficiently perspicuous?

But not only are all things intelligible to man, it is added, "all to be interpreted by the laws of ordinary sense, and constantly applied by grammatical, logical, and rhetorical rules." And if God had written the Scriptures himself, or given them through man as an unconscious instrument, would not this have been equally the case? Must not every thing written in any language necessarily be understood in the sense of that language? To say that God might have written his word in human language, and that its meaning was not to be judged by the ordinary rules of that language, is a contradiction in terms. For if it is not to be understood in the sense of the language, it is not in the language. The fact that revelation is written in the peculiar style of each of the inspired writers, is a peculiarity in inspiration worthy of being noticed; and from it doubtless we may derive instruction; but that it is written in our language, and to be understood in the sense of the language in which it is written, and that it is intelligible to men, are no peculiarities. To mention such things as a distinguishing part of inspiration is the most silly trifling. The same may be said with respect

to the alternative of speaking by angels. "He 'views the Bible,'" says the reviewer, "as God 'speaking to man, not by angels,'" &c. And did ever any one take a different view of this matter? Was it ever thought that the Bible was written by angels in the language of angels? A most important discovery surely, that the Bible was not written in the language of angels! By angels it might have been written, or by the finger of God; but whether by the one or by the other, it must have been written in the language of those to whom it was designed to be a revelation. The language of angels then, it is absurd to mention as an alternative. What Cimmerian darkness is it then that clouds the minds of these writers, that as often as they make the supposition that God or angels had written a revelation for man, they think it might have been written in the language of heaven! A book written in the language of angels, it is absurd to speak of as a revelation to man.

Let the reader observe in this extract the limitation even to divine superintendence in the writing of the Scriptures—"with a constant preservation 'from all error affecting the revelation.'" I noticed the same thing in Mr Wilson as this reviewer has done. According to this the writers of Scripture were not preserved from all error, but only from such error as should affect the revelation. This, however, seems inconsistent with many of Mr Wilson's assertions.

The reviewers next inform us: "We have often thought long and anxiously on this much

‘ controverted question ; nor are we wholly igno-
 ‘ rant of what the most celebrated biblical writers
 ‘ and theologians have written upon it, or of the
 ‘ difficulties which may be supposed to attach
 ‘ themselves to whatever conclusions we may
 ‘ adopt.” If these gentlemen would consult the
 Scriptures with the teachableness of little child-
 ren, they might sooner come to their purpose, than
 either by abstract thinking on the question as a
 subject of controversy, or by poring over the vo-
 lumes of biblical writers. The last is an aid not
 to be despised ; but I am convinced that an impli-
 cit reliance on it, to the neglect of the first, is the
 cause of much of the very great ignorance of the
 learned with respect to this subject. As long as
 men attempt to surmount all difficulties by un-
 taught distinctions in inspiration, and by theories
 founded merely on supposition, instead of submit-
 ting to the testimony of God, that “ all Scripture
 ‘ is given by inspiration of God,” it may be ex-
 pected that, like the sorcerer who opposed Paul,
 they will seek one to lead them at noon-day. That
 there are difficulties connected with inspiration, I
 do not deny ; for I do not know any truth or duty
 revealed in Scripture that has not its difficulties.
 But this I know, that the authors of the late theo-
 ries have not in the smallest degree contributed to
 remove these difficulties. The greatest of these
 difficulties remain, even were any of these theories
 admitted. The greatest difficulties that have ever
 occurred to me do not at all respect the complete
 inspiration of the Scriptures, both in matter and

they are recorded in the Bible which "To be Gods book must be ^{his} in matter and words, in substance and form" Here then, according to Mr. Carson, are no specimens of things not inspired occurring in the Bible, every word which is inspired. Mr. Carson 71 furnishes no clue by which we may distinguish inspired "speeches and sentiments" from those which are not inspired.

25 words. All that the doctrine of the inspiration of every word in the original Scriptures demands, is, that every thing written in them was written by inspiration. This has no more difficulty when it applies to the advice of Gamaliel, or the Letter of Claudius Lysias, the chief Captain, than when it applies to the Sermon on the Mount. That every word of Scripture has been inspired, does not imply that every speech or sentiment recorded there should be inspired. The Letter of Claudius Lysias was not inspired, but it is inserted in the Scriptures by inspiration; and for a purpose useful for the edification of the man of God. To this view of inspiration I have never met an objection that could detain me for a moment. All that Mr Wilson and the Christian Observer bring forward is perfectly consistent with it. What they allege, is a thing so obvious, that it could lie hid from no child that is able to read the Scriptures; and instead of being in opposition to my sentiments, is taken for granted in all my reasoning. Paul's writings are in Paul's style; but this applies to the thoughts as well as the form.

“ Our general impression upon the whole,” say the reviewers, “ we confess, is, that Mr Wilson is not far from having arrived at the true philosophy of the matter.” The thing under discussion is not a matter of philosophy, nor to be ascertained by philosophical investigation. It is a matter of divine testimony, the meaning of which is to be ascertained by the laws of language. God says, “ all Scripture is given by inspiration of

and do not you
say what is
equivalent
to this on the
preceding
page ?

‘ God;’ Mr Wilson, on the contrary, says, some part of Scripture is human.* Mr Wilson’s philosophy then teaches him to contradict God. But Mr Wilson’s theory is as bad philosophy as it is bad theology. It makes a part contained, no portion of the whole that contains it. The manner is supposed not to belong to the writing of which it is the manner. The style belongs to the writing; and if all Scripture is given by inspiration, the manner of Scripture must be given by inspiration. No theory was ever propounded with less philosophical perspicacity than this. It distinguishes what cannot be distinguished; and ascribes effects to causes with which they have not the slightest connection. Besides, this theory makes only the matter divine. Then the words are not divine. Are the words the matter? Yet it makes the words of a great part of the Scriptures to be divine as well as the matter. Is this philosophy?

Again, it makes all the matter divine, yet it makes a great part of the matter human, supplied from the sources of the private knowledge, information, &c. of the different writers. Is this philosophy? Nor are these the only inconsistencies of this theory. While it makes all the matter divine, it supposes the possibility even of some error in the matter, in things that do not respect the revelation.

Again, it makes the *inspiration* itself the joint production of God and man. Is this philosophy?

Still farther, it makes only the manner human, yet it allows “ the greatest freedom and latitude in ‘ the use of each writer’s knowledge and talents,

‘ and ordinary means of information.’ Is not this something more than manner? In the exercise of this freedom, did they introduce no matter? If it is said that they were superintended in the introduction of this matter, I reply that then they had not the greatest freedom and latitude. I reply farther, that superintendence is not inspiration, and that things introduced under superintendence are not mere manner. There is no consistency in this theory.

“ We would, on the one hand,” say the reviewers, “ zealously maintain against the semi-sceptic, ‘ or Socinian disputer, the plenary inspiration of the ‘ Scriptures; we would not allow for a moment ‘ with the Belshams and Priestlys of England, or ‘ the Neologians of Germany, that an apostle or ‘ Baptist may maintain true conclusions from inconclusive arguments; that Jewish prejudices were ‘ allowed to pervert the Christian records; that the ‘ Evangelists were little more than mere ordinary ‘ relators of a true story; or that a God of infinite ‘ wisdom permitted his record of mercy to a perishing world, to be liable to take any doubtful colouring by passing through a human medium, ‘ what it must have done, had it not been dictated ‘ by his immediate and infallible inspiration.”

I may here remark the want of candour in such a use of the word *plenary*. Surely *plenary inspiration* cannot apply to the views of those who make any exceptions to the inspiration of the Scriptures. Does not this phrase refer to every thing in the Scriptures, and to every word of the Scriptures?

Is it not then an abuse of language to speak of holding plenary inspiration, while some things in Scripture are expressly excepted from inspiration? This is a mean artifice to sap the foundation of the full inspiration of Scripture under the mask of holding it. To those unacquainted with what has been written on the subject, the phrase *plenary inspiration*, would undoubtedly convey a meaning very different from that in which it is dishonestly used by many writers. With what propriety can persons assert that they hold the doctrine of plenary inspiration, when, according to their systems, much of the Scriptures was not inspired at all? Some part of it belongs to man, and in many things he was only superintended, which is a very different thing from inspiration. But why are the poor Belshams and Priestlys, with the Neologians of Germany, not to be indulged in the exceptions which they make to inspiration? Is this high popish prerogative, of distinguishing and limiting, where there are no distinctions or limitations in Scripture, to be confined to Evangelical divines alone? Must the Belshams and Priestlys surrender to the more orthodox zeal and predilections of the Christian Observer? What is it that can put down the impious views of Belsham and Priestly on this subject? No abstract reasoning; no abhorrence of Christian Observers, no *a priori* evidence,—nothing but the declarations of God in the Scriptures. God says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” This cuts down the horrible blasphemy of Belsham and Priestly; and this equally cuts down the less

horrible blasphemy of the Rev. D. Wilson and the Christian Observer. The man who makes any exception, cannot consistently refuse any other exception. The difference between Mr Wilson and Dr Priestly is only in degree. Both proceed on the same principle, though the evangelical minister may not choose to carry his doctrine as far as the Socinian philosopher. The Christian Observer is shocked with the heresy that makes the Evangelists little more than mere ordinary relaters of a true story; yet how much higher does even Mr Wilson place them in some parts of their narrative? The Christian Observer thinks it necessary that the record of mercy should be dictated by *immediate inspiration*. But is this the kind of inspiration for which Mr Wilson contends in the Evangelists? Much of the record is not by inspiration at all.

“ Yet, at the same time,” says the Christian Observer, “ does not every divine, even those who ‘ would most strongly object to the latter part of ‘ Mr Wilson’s statements; nay, does not the most ‘ uninstructed person who thinks the very words of ‘ King James’ translation, the original diction of ‘ the Holy Spirit, familiarly speak of the respective styles of St Paul or St John; of the sublimity of Isaiah, or the pathos of Jeremiah; of the characteristic peculiarities of the four Evangelists, all relating the same truths by the same ‘ inspiration, yet each in a manner which may be ‘ justly called his own?’ ” Very true, that there is a distinction in the style of the different writers of Scripture, and that each writer may be said to have

his own. Learned and unlearned admit this. The defenders of the full inspiration of the Scriptures speak of this, as well as their opponents. But what is the inference from all this? Is it, that Mr Wilson has made a discovery, when he has turned into a theory what is admitted by all? Is it that, as the writers of Scripture have a characteristic style, they were not influenced by God in the use of that style? Is it not possible, that God could employ their style, as well as their tongue or pen? Yes, we talk familiarly of Paul's peculiar style, and of John's peculiar style; and we talk as familiarly of Paul's doctrine, of Paul's reasoning, &c. But in so speaking, we do not mean to assert, that the writings of Paul, both in doctrine and style, are not God's. Indeed, the very universality of the fact of such a manner of speaking, is the strongest evidence, that there is no opposition between the supposition of a characteristic style, and the belief that this, in another point of view, is the work of God. As the most ignorant persons find no difficulty in admitting, that the Scriptures may be written in the respective styles of the different writers, while they believe that every word of the Scriptures is inspired, why will the learned conjure up a difficulty to give scope to their ingenuity in forming theories? But where have these sages found the man who believes that the very words of the authorised version, are the original diction of the Holy Spirit? Is there any one able to read the Bible, who believes that it was written in English? But this is not all. This person who thinks that

the Bible was originally written in English, is quite conversant with the characteristic style of each of the inspired writers; and can speak as accurately as Longinus himself, of the sublimity of the one, the pathos of the other, &c. What a compound of ignorance and knowledge must he be?

The reviewers proceed, "Mathematically to adj-
 ' just correctly the two points in their minute
 ' boundaries, may not be easy; but it appears to
 ' us to be an excess of scrupulosity to deny, when
 ' expressly reasoning on the subject, what we con-
 ' stantly admit when not thinking of it." What
 have mathematics to do with settling metaphysical
 distinctions? Were an angel to draw the line, it
 could not be done mathematically. There is no
 more propriety in bringing mathematics to settle a
 difficulty on the subject of inspiration, than in
 bringing a text from the Bible, to settle a point in
 the conic sections. But the distinction as to the
 present subject, is not a line separating between
 adjacent territories; the same territory belongs to
 different occupiers, to the one it belongs in one
 sense, to the other in another. The Epistle to the
 Romans, for instance, is the Epistle of Paul, con-
 tains the thoughts, reasoning, arguments, language,
 and style of Paul; but the same Epistle is the
 word of God, both in style and matter. It would
 not only be "an excess of scrupulosity to deny,
 ' when expressly reasoning on the subject, what
 ' we constantly admit when not thinking of it,"
 but it would also be extreme folly. But at all
 times, we are willing to make the admission in the

amplest terms. Did any man ever deny, in reasoning on this subject, that the Scriptures have the characteristic style of their different writers?

In illustration of this variety of characteristic style, substantially expressing the same thing, the reviewers give us an example. "Take a familiar example, a parent says separately to four children, 'call your brother Richard.' One simply repeats the message as the words of his parent: 'Richard, my father desires me to call you.' A second makes the message his own: 'Richard, my father wants you.' A third repeats it as an injunction: 'Richard, you must go to my father.' The fourth: 'Brother Richard, pray run directly to our dear father, for he wants to speak to you.' Are not all these exactly the father's message, and is it to contravene this proposition to say, that each was delivered in a manner characteristic of the respective speakers?" Now this example is entirely unsuited to the illustration of the point for which it is brought. It gives a mere variety of expression, but by no means four characteristic styles. So far from this, the very same individual might, in delivering the message, on different occasions, use each of these forms of expression. Yes, and twenty other similar varieties. Indeed, in repeating a message to different individuals separately, who is it that keeps by a single mode of expression? A hundred such varieties are consistent with the style of the same speaker.

As an illustration of substantial harmony, the example is equally defective. Did any one ever

suppose, that mere variety of expression is contradiction? The most inveterate hater of the word of God, would never allege any inconsistency in this, if he met it in the Scriptures. There is not even the shadow of an appearance of contradiction. The relation of each of the brothers is as much, and as directly, the father's message, as words could express. Did not each call Richard? What else was the command of the father? This example then, does not correspond to any of the apparent discrepancies in the account of the Evangelists, to which the infidel objects. Of what avail would such an example be to harmonize the four accounts of the inscription over the cross? Instead of sending four messengers to one person, it would have been more to the purpose to have sent one messenger, and have given four writers to report the delivery of the message, with such a variety as the Gospels give of the above fact. Indeed, to send four messengers on such an errand, was a very clumsy expedient. The invention of a reviewer ought to be more fertile in resources. If the difficulties on the subject of inspiration were of the nature that this example supposes, it would be an easy thing indeed to clear them away. He must be a sceptic indeed, who alleges that, when a number of persons are commanded to call an individual, the message is not executed, except they all use the same words. Certainly the reviewers have thought long, and anxiously, and profoundly on this subject. After their able solutions of the most

formidable objections, infidelity must ever after feel abashed.

The reviewers are of opinion, that it does not derogate from the author's conclusions of full inspiration, that he has admitted, "though perhaps 'not in the most desirable words, a wonderful union of divine and human agency in that inspiration.'" So then, it appears, the reviewers agree with the author in making man's part in the business, a constituent of inspiration. Man, it seems, has partly inspired the Scriptures. And do the reviewers really think, that it does not derogate from full inspiration, that a part has been effected by man without God? Indeed they object to the author's phraseology. They would not say, that "the Scriptures are both human and divine;" but they say, "when he explicates his proposition, we agree with him." Now in what sense can it be said, that the Scriptures are human, in consistency with the assertion, that they are all divine, or fully inspired? Only as they are written by the instrumentality of man, in the style of man, and after the manner of human writings. But this will not serve the purpose of the author's theory. This theory makes them human as a constituent part of their composition; a part in which God has no hand. Now if there is any thing merely human in the Scriptures, it cannot be true that they are wholly of God, or fully inspired. The author's doctrine then is a self-contradiction. The only reason why this contradiction lies hid from the smallest critical discernment is, that by the assertion

that the style and manner are human, he frequently means no more than what every one admits, namely, that they are the characteristic style and manner of the writers. In this light the Christian Observer seems to consider his doctrine; but in this sense there is nothing in the assertion that can entitle it to be called a theory of Mr Wilson's. Besides, his assertions again and again make the style and manner a distinct part in the composition of the Scriptures, in which God had no hand.

But why do the reviewers refuse to say that the Scriptures are human as well as divine, if they adopt the author's conclusions? If a constituent part of the composition belongs to man in such a sense, that it does not also belong to God, is not such a fact as truly human, as the rest is divine? Indeed, according to Mr Wilson, the Scriptures are neither human nor divine; they are not, as he asserts, in contradiction to himself, all human and all divine; they are partly human and partly divine. But according to his theory, they are as truly human as they are divine. The Christian Observer then appears to be very slightly acquainted with this subject.

It is much to be lamented, that a periodical which has so much influence on the Christian public, should express itself substantially satisfied with a theory of inspiration which lowers the character of the divine word, without even the alleviating circumstance, of removing a single difficulty connected with the subject. That so crude a theory should be dignified as a philosophical solution of a

difficult theological question, hitherto unanswered, must surprise every one capable of analysing the author's paradoxes. Indeed, a paradoxical way of speaking is the only thing original in this scheme. Let it be divested of this, and nothing is left for Mr Wilson. The fact, that in the Scriptures there is a human manner, has never been questioned—has never been unknown. That not only the manner, but the thoughts, reasonings, and conclusions may all be ascribed to the writers, is a thing that no man who reads the Bible can question. How then can Mr Wilson deserve the credit of unveiling an important hidden truth? What has he discovered, that was not always known? To the careless reader, who never thinks of forming accurate ideas of what lies before him, there is in Mr Wilson's language, the appearance of great depth and metaphysical acumen in reconciling things apparently incongruous; but when it is more closely examined, it turns out to be a pompous way of saying nothing. But if God is in very deed, the AUTHOR of the Scriptures, how guilty must he be, who has exerted his ingenuity to deprive him of any part of them! How guilty must they be, who encourage him in this sacrilege!

STRICTURES ON SOME PARTS
 OF THE
 REMARKS OF THE ECCLECTIC REVIEW,
May 1, 1829,
 ON
 DR SCHLEIERMACHER'S CRITICAL ESSAY ON
 THE GOSPEL OF ST LUKE.

It will be recollected that it was in the *Ecclectic Review* that the infidel paper appeared, which excludes from the sacred canon of inspired Scripture, a considerable portion of the Old Testament. It will not therefore appear surprising to any who are acquainted with this fact, that the same professedly Evangelical publication, has, in its review of Dr Schleiermacher's *Critical Essay on the Gospel of Luke*, audaciously charged the Evangelists with falsehood. The accounts in the different Gospels are, according to the reviewers, in some points so contradictory, that they have fearlessly adopted the conclusion that the writers of them have erred.

The work which they profess to review is on the origination of the Gospels, and is of an entirely Neo-

logical cast. The reviewers indeed censure his boldness and condemn his errors, but they approach him with such awe and timidity, that their gentle reproach must be very agreeable to him, if he has any vanity. I shall not trouble myself with the review farther, than respects the subject of inspiration. Schleiermacher's book is one of those productions, that professes to throw light upon the subject of the Evangelical History, by tracing the different Gospels to their origin. Such writers suppose that they can discover the different external sources from which the Evangelists took their accounts, and that this discovery removes the difficulties felt from the disagreement of their narratives. The elucidation of this question has occupied some of the most considerable Biblical scholars in our own country, and the Ecclectic Review has produced a specimen on this subject, which shews their entire approbation of such attempts. Now, notwithstanding the celebrity of some of the writers who have occupied their ingenuity on this subject, and the general approbation of their labour, I will be as rash as Job's three friends, and pronounce with the fullest confidence, that the utmost exertions of talent can never produce any thing but a figment in this matter; and farther, that though the truth was exactly known, it would be of no value for the alleged purpose. It is indeed perfectly agreeable to the doctrine of complete inspiration, that the writers of the Gospels should have taken much of their accounts from external sources. Inspiration applies to them in copying a genealogical title, receiving an account of

a fact from an eye witness, copying uninspired records, or making extracts from them, as well as in the most important communications of the Holy Spirit. But to pretend at this distance of time, to discover and ascertain the different external sources from which each of the Evangelists draw their materials, is an attempt that sober good sense never will make. No historical question can ever be settled by theory. The utmost that ingenuity can reach is probability, or rather plausibility. A thing may have been so as is alleged, but it may not have been so, and nothing but childish credulity will ever receive as historical truth, the most harmonious tales of fiction.

If this is a just observation, how deplorable is it that the young Biblical student should have his talents so misdirected as they are likely to be, by the remarks in the following extract from the *Ecclectic Review*?

“ The subject to which this volume (Schleiermacher’s Essay) relates, is the origination of the Gospels, particularly the first three. The Bishop of Peterborough’s Dissertation, annexed to his Translation of Michaelis’s Introduction, in 1801, first brought the subject fully before the minds of English readers. The early Protestant Commentators and Divines, with the exception of Grotius, had scarcely adverted to the subject, or had contented themselves with occasional and brief notices, such as a slight examination must have ascertained to be quite unsatisfactory. Towards the beginning of the eighteenth century, Le Clerc, Mill, and Wetstein, proposed their opinions on

‘ this question; and in a following period, it was in-
 ‘ vestigated with great assiduity by Michaelis and
 ‘ many others of the German critics, and in our
 ‘ own country chiefly by the late Dr Henry Owen.
 ‘ But it is during the last forty years that the most
 ‘ laborious diligence has been employed upon it,
 ‘ by the late estimable Dr Niemeyer, by Eich-
 ‘ horn, and by many others of the German Bible
 ‘ scholars.” Such is the history of this foolish and
 untaught question. The laborious trifling of mis-
 employed learning and ingenuity is here exhibited
 with an approbation that must give a wrong direc-
 tion to the talents of young biblical students, as far
 as it has any influence on the Christian public. In
 what immediately follows, we have the phenomena
 and the theory founded on them. “ Whoever reads
 ‘ a Greek Harmony of the Gospels, must be struck
 ‘ with these facts: that Matthew, Mark, and Luke
 ‘ frequently recite the same facts, but particularly
 ‘ speeches of our Lord, in the same words;—that
 ‘ often there is such a variation of the words, but
 ‘ conservation of the sense, as usually takes place
 ‘ when two persons translate into one language a
 ‘ passage from a foreign book;—that still more in-
 ‘ stances occur, in which the variation is much less
 ‘ than must necessarily be in the case just suppos-
 ‘ ed, while yet the conformity is not perfect, as in
 ‘ the first class of instances;—that in some cases,
 ‘ the differences are very considerable, referring to
 ‘ words spoken, actions performed, and the con-
 ‘ secution of events;—and that in other cases, the
 ‘ variations are such as appear irreconcilable by

‘ any method that ingenuity can devise, so that we
 ‘ are driven to the conclusion, that some of the
 ‘ Evangelists have erred in the dates of events, the
 ‘ combination of materials, and other minute cir-
 ‘ cumstances, merely of an outward and mechani-
 ‘ cal kind, and which have no effect whatever on
 ‘ the certainty of their narrative, or its grand use
 ‘ for religious instruction.”

Here we have without disguise the appalling assertion that there are various errors in the Evangelical histories. It is not my business to controvert this infidel statement, else I might allege that ingenuity might yet do what it has never done, and that all former failures are no certain proof that the thing is impracticable. These sages are not to take it for granted, that human ingenuity can never advance beyond their attainments, or even the advance of all former times. I might allege reconciliation might be possible, though human ingenuity should never effect it, and that a proper sense of human weakness, as well as a reverence for the word of God, ought to have prevented this blasphemous charge. Pray, gentlemen reviewers, might not a harmony of the Gospels be possible, though your exquisite sagacity has not found it? I might allege also, that in effecting a harmony, every possible supposition is perfectly allowable, and any thing that could possibly reconcile the accounts may be taken for granted. Even if two accounts apparently of the same transaction should be palpably irreconcilable, there is still a possibility that it is not the same. A sentiment uttered on one occa-

sion, may have been uttered on another with some variety, and that which appears to be the same miracle variously related, may in reality have been two. But I will allege nothing like this. I will take it for granted that the blasphemous charge of these Evangelical critics is true. Of what use on this supposition, are speculations on the origination of the Gospels? Can the result of these speculations produce a harmony where there is acknowledged contradiction? They may account for variety, but can they excuse error? If the Evangelists have erred, it does not free them from that error, to discover its source. After all the speculations of these theorists, the error, with all its evils, still remains. But these errors, it seems, are of small moment. They are merely "outward and 'mechanical.'" But how errors of dates and false combinations of fact, can be called *the outward and mechanical errors of history*, is what I cannot understand. Faults of this kind do not belong to in-artificial composition. Nor is it true that errors of this description have no effect on the certainty of the narrative. It is true indeed, that the substance of a narrative may be true, while there is a mistake in the date; and two facts may be true, while they are erroneously combined; but error in any of these respects, brings the whole Bible into suspicion; and when the whole claims the authority of inspiration, a false date is as bad as a false narrative. When we read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of 'God,'" we cannot admit that God has committed an error in the date, more than in the transactions.

This passage of Scripture demands truth in the dates, as well as in the substance of the narratives. If the Scriptures assert inspiration equally with respect to every part of them, an error of any kind, were it established against them, would overturn their authority.*

"There are, indeed," says the reviewers, "some persons who suppose that all and singular the sentences and words, in the very order in which they stand through the whole of the Gospel Records, were literally dictated by the Holy Spirit;" Extravagant fanatics! What could lead them to so wild a conceit! What absurdity to suppose that the words and sentences of a book, aye, *all and singular the words and sentences*, in the very order in which they stand, should be the very words and sentences and arrangement of the author of such book! What then, gentlemen, is your theory on this subject? Will you shew us how any piece of composition can be ascribed to an author, when the words, sentences, and collocation are not his own? Are the words, sentences, and arrangement, no parts of the writing to which they belong? I am one of those fantastic people who believe that a writing contains all the words, sentences, and arrangement, that are found in it; and therefore cannot see how all Scripture is given by inspiration, if any word originally in the Scriptures was uninspired. I am so old fashioned, as to believe, that if all Scripture is inspired, there is no Scripture which is uninspired; for I have not yet learned to believe both sides of a contradiction. But

* See a complete refutation of this view in the first part of Mr. Noble's second lecture.

this is not the most extravagant thing that these grave reviewers charge on their opponents on the question of inspiration. They add, "and that the ' Evangelists had no other part to perform than ' that of mechanical hand-writers." Stop a little, gentlemen. Where did you find this? In whose writings can you verify this charge? I will not say that you never met with it, for in London, that hot-bed of fanaticism, there may be paroxysms of religious phrenzy beyond the cold conception of mere provincials. But I will say, since I began to examine this subject, I have not met it. I never met an individual who looked upon the Evangelists as merely mechanical hand-writers. It is universally admitted, that the inspired writers were rational organs through which the Holy Spirit communicated his mind, though every word written by them in the Scriptures was from God. There is nothing irreconcilable in the two parts of this statement. God can surely speak his words through man, in such a way that the words and thoughts shall be the words and thoughts of both. If, however, the reviewers make this assertion with respect to those who in the late controversy have held the doctrine of verbal inspiration, the charge is utterly false. And there is some reason to think, that this is the allusion. For they add, " those persons, ' therefore, do not shrink from maintaining, that the ' variations, equally with the coincidences, even those ' which apparently are the most insusceptible of being bent to reconciliation, all proceeded from one ' and the same source, the verbal prescription of the

' Spirit of truth." I have distinctly avowed the sentiment here alluded to; and I do not shrink from defending any thing I have advanced on the subject. I have said, that any variety that is warrantable in the different rehearsals of the same fact by an honest witness in the things of man, is equally warrantable in the different relations of the same fact by the Holy Spirit. It is a fanatical misconception of the nature of truth and falsehood, to suppose that what is consistent with veracity in the language of man, would be inconsistent with it in the language of God. To repeat a narrative with the exactness of a message in Homer's heralds, is not required by truth in the language of either God or man. And if there are any discrepancies in the accounts of the Evangelists, which do not come under the protection of this shield, but are real errors, I maintain that they overturn the inspiration of the Scriptures altogether, and are inconsistent with the declaration, that "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God."

"The chief questions are," say the reviewers, "Did one or two of the first three Evangelists transcribe from the other? Or did they all make use of some one common document, taking from it more or less of their respective matter? Or had they a variety of such common documents? The affirmative of each of these positions has been maintained by different writers; and each has attempted to shew the impossibility of any theory being true, except his own." Now, if there is an irreconcilable difference between the accounts

* Undoubtedly true; but in-
 explicable a
 the theory of
 these assert-
 ions, or on any
 other than
 that of
 Swedenborg

of the Evangelists on any point, how can it harmonize them to know the sources from which each took his matter? Do not the reviewers assert, that some of the accounts are erroneous? Of what avail then is it to point out the source of the error, even were this possible? Can this excuse falsehood, or convert falsehood into truth? If two English historians differ in the date of any event, does it reconcile them to point out the different authorities which they have followed? So far then from these being the chief questions on this subject, they are not questions that relate to the subject at all. And as they are questions that are not answered by the Scriptures, they are questions that no man of a sound mind would ever ask. They are questions that never can be answered but by conjecture; and on such answers a wise man will not build any part of his faith on any subject. They are questions perfectly similar to those which have inquired after the name and the kindred of the Witch of Ender, and the names of those two men who accompanied Saul when he went to consult her. Who can tell whether her name was Zephaniah, or in what respect would it profit us to know this? Is it possible to determine, whether or not she was the mother of Abner? Or would the settling of this question enrich our knowledge? Whether Abner and Amasa were the two men that accompanied Saul on his errand, cannot now be known; and could it be known, would be of no advantage.

Such questions did much occupy the Jewish Doctors, and much of the information which they communicated in their commentaries is of this sort. It is lamentable to find the censors of the press, the professed defenders of evangelical sentiments in England in the nineteenth century, approving of a species of inquiry equally vain, equally useless. To find out the sources of the Gospels by theories founded on suppositions, is as idle as to attempt the discovery of the sources of the Nile or the Niger in the same manner.

That my readers may be enabled to judge with more advantage with respect to these competent theories, I shall present them with a specimen that these reviewers have themselves exhibited with approbation. "Perhaps we shall be forgiven," they say, "if we here borrow a few paragraphs 'from lectures on this subject, which have been 'delivered more than twenty years ago, in one of 'the Dissenting Colleges near the metropolis."

"Wherever the apostles went to preach the gospel, we find them attentive to two great objects ; the first, the conversion of men to the faith and obedience of their Redeemer ; the second, the instruction and edification of those who had been already converted.

"In discharging the duties of the second class, the first Christian teachers must have experienced such a state of things as I shall now take the liberty of supposing. The new converts could not but feel themselves deeply interested to inquire for all attainable information relative to the cha-

‘ racter, conduct, miracles, and discourses of the
 ‘ Lord Jesus. With such requests, the apostolic
 ‘ instructors would undoubtedly be disposed to com-
 ‘ ply, to the utmost of their power and opportu-
 ‘ nity. We have in Acts xx. 35, a reference to in-
 ‘ formation of this kind, but which is not recorded
 ‘ by any one of the Evangelists.

“ The relations thus given by the apostles, would
 ‘ be of various length, and would comprehend one
 ‘ or more anecdotes or discourses ; as the judgment
 ‘ of the relaters, under the inspiring guidance of
 ‘ the Holy Spirit, dictated the propriety of the se-
 ‘ lection, in application to the circumstances of
 ‘ those for whose benefit it was imparted.

“ These relations would be justly esteemed of
 ‘ the highest value ; on account of the important
 ‘ and interesting nature of the matter, and on account
 ‘ of the promised influence of the Holy Spirit, to
 ‘ bring to the recollection of the disciples “ all things
 ‘ ‘ whatsoever Jesus had said unto them.”

“ Within the immediate confines of Judea, the
 ‘ apostles would usually deliver their discourses in
 ‘ Syro-Chaldaic, the language of the country ; but
 ‘ in other places they commonly spoke the Alex-
 ‘ andrian Greek.

“ Though it is not probable that any of the apos-
 ‘ tles, during the first few years of their laborious
 ‘ duties, committed to writing any large accounts ;
 ‘ they might, upon request, write down such or
 ‘ such a particular relation or discourse of their
 ‘ Divine Master. Or, perhaps more probably,
 ‘ some one of their hearers wrote from their mouths

‘ those relations. In each of their various audiences of converts, it may surely be presumed, that one person, at least, was competent to perform this service for himself and his companions in the faith.

“ It is further a matter of reasonable presumption, that such memorials, records, fragments, or whatever we may call them, would be presented by the writer to the apostle from whose oral instructions they had been derived; with a request for revision and correction. Thus, these detached portions of narrative, conversation, or continued discourse, would obtain most justly the sanction of apostolic authority; and would be preserved, read, circulated, copied, and revered accordingly.

“ To the Evangelists Mark and Luke, such fragments would be of immense value. It may be presumed, that they diligently collected them, that they were able fully to appreciate their claims to authenticity, and that they introduced those which they knew to be of indubitable authority into their respective narratives; and some of them might, with equally good reason, be inserted by Matthew in his original Syro-Chaldaic Gospel. Luke adverts, in plain terms, to a plurality of sources from which he had deduced his information, when he says, that “ those who ‘ from the beginning had been eye witnesses and ‘ attendants of the word, had delivered” their declarations; and that he himself “ had diligently ‘ traced up all from the first.” When the translator

‘ of Matthew’s Gospel into Greek, whether that was
 ‘ himself or any other person, found any of these
 ‘ fragments which corresponded with passages in his
 ‘ original, he would act properly by availing him-
 ‘ self of them, and transcribing them into his ver-
 ‘ sion. This conjecture applies, of course, to the
 ‘ Greek fragments, which may be presumed to
 ‘ have been the more numerous of the two classes.

“ The inference from these positions is; that,
 ‘ where we find the continued verbal agreements in
 ‘ the three or in two of these sacred writers, we
 ‘ are reading an authentic Greek fragment, which
 ‘ each possessed and faithfully inserted in his work ;
 ‘ but that, where we find the coincidences which are
 ‘ not strictly verbal, but lie in the collocation of
 ‘ sentences and members of sentences, each of the
 ‘ writers had before him a copy of the same Syro-
 ‘ Chaldaic fragment, and translated it into Greek
 ‘ for his own purpose.”

Now what is this but a theological novel, as much the work of invention as *Waverley*? There is no more reason to believe that all these suppositions were actually realized, than that Sir Walter Scott gives an authentic history of the attempt of Prince Charles Edward. Is it possible that a writer can be so frantic as to call on his readers to receive conjectures as facts? Must every link of a chain of suppositions be admitted as historical evidence? The novels of Sir Walter Scott do not demand our faith, though they may possess much historical truth; and they give the knowledge of life, manners, and of many things that may be profitable ;

but a thousand volumes of such theological romances would not enrich a reader with a single idea. Reasonings founded on conjecture with respect to the things of God, pervert the mind from the true pursuit and the true sources of knowledge. How lamentable to find a Professor in a theological chair, in a seminary professedly evangelical, amusing his students with reveries about the origination of the Gospels, instead of an able exposition of the contents of the Bible! If this is the way in which the English Dissenters are now taught in their Colleges, it will not be surprising if, in process of time, their professors shall amuse the students by mimicking *the trick of the resurrection of Jesus*. Whatever ingenuity a man may discover in devising and harmonizing such theories, a sound mind he cannot possess, and none but fanatics can receive edification.

But granting for a moment, that all these conjectures were matter of fact, of what avail would this theory be for harmonising the evangelists? Would it convert the supposed errors in the gospels into truth? Would it shew that inspiration might communicate a falsehood? "Upon this general basis," say the reviewers, "we understand that the Professor whose words we have borrowed, conceives that both the agreements and the disagreements, and all the other phenomena of the case, may be accounted for; so far as it is in our power to account for them." This *basis*! A chain of suppositions! This is a basis without a base. This is truly like the Indian philosopher,

who supported the world on the back of an elephant, and the elephant on the back of a huge tortoise. This theory might, indeed, shew the reason of the coincidences, and the reason of the disagreements. But does this harmonise the discrepancies? Does this shew that all Scripture may be given by inspiration, while the Scriptures abound in errors? To find out the external sources of the gospels, even were it now possible, would be nothing but a matter of mere curiosity. The man who would give two hundred pounds for a Queen Ann's farthing, might value such information. But any man of a well regulated mind, would utterly undervalue such a discovery. Dr Schleiermacher's theory, the reviewers inform us, is essentially the same with that of the English Dissenting Professor; but the intrepidity of our critics begin to fail them, when the German Neologist attempts to harmonise Matthew and Luke, by turning some parts of the accounts into allegories and fables. "But when," say they, "to accomplish the long-felt desideratum of harmonising this narrative (of Luke) with that in Matthew i. 18.—ii. 23. he brings out the supposition, that certain parts in the *narrative* of each Evangelist are *poetical allegories*, we feel the ground shake under our feet." But had the reviewers been as well acquainted with the country as their profession demanded, they would have left their guide on the edge of the quagmire, instead of accompanying him to the very gulph which now affrights them. They should not have entered the very margin of the regions of conjecture on a theo-

logical subject. And after all, are not the fears of the reviewers either affectation, or cowardice? Is it worse in the German Neologist, to charge a falsehood on the Bible under the decent veil of allegory or instructive fable, than in the reviewers to charge in direct terms, various errors on the accounts of the Evangelists? These young Neological recruits, who have now shewn themselves so nervous at the first fire, will forget their fears, it is to be expected, during the remainder of the engagement. If they have now courage to charge the book of God with errors in dates and combination of facts, the Neologians have no reason to despair, that they will come in time to pronounce, without faltering, "patches of parable and instructive fable."

On the whole, it is evident, that the German Neologians have had their influence even on the evangelical press of England; and that with all the horror expressed with respect to their most extravagant dogmas, there is an attempt to meet them, and a desire to fraternize, as far as possible, in their speculations. The tone of this Review indicates much more complaisance towards the errors of learned ingenuity, than of zeal for the honour of the word of God. A reviewer possessing an apostolic spirit, must have stamped every part of Dr Schleiermachers' work with his strongest reprobation.

REMARKS*

ON

DR PYE SMITH'S THEORY OF INSPIRATION.

DR SMITH'S account of inspiration appears to me to proceed on principles at variance with the fundamental laws of biblical interpretation. It founds on theory, and supports itself not by the declarations of the divine word itself, but by the supposition of difficulties and views of necessity. Whatever distance there may be between the inspiration allowed by Dr Haffner, and that contended for by this writer, they both build on the same objectionable foundation, though the religious sentiments of the latter, permit him to ascribe a greater de-

* These remarks were originally subjoined to a Review of the Rev. Dr. J. Pye Smith's Defence of Dr Haffner of Strasburg's Neological Preface to the Bible. The latter is in this edition omitted, as being unconnected with the subject of Inspiration.

gree of divine assistance. What is the method that just criticism would adopt in ascertaining the nature and extent of inspiration? Undoubtedly it is by arguing, what saith the Scriptures? Whether the Scriptures are inspired at all, and what is the extent of that inspiration, can be learned from no other source. I turn then to 2 Tim. iii. 16, and it immediately gives me full and perfectly satisfactory information. It declares, that "all Scripture 'is given by inspiration of God.'" Here plenary inspiration is expressly asserted; for what is a *writing* but *words written*? The thoughts and sentiments are the meaning of the words. To say that a *writing* is inspired while the *words* are uninspired, is a contradiction in terms. It is not said that the doctrines of Scripture, or the thoughts and sentiments of Scripture, but that the Scriptures themselves, are given by the inspiration of God. It is of the words as containing the meaning, and not of the meaning as distinguished from the words, that inspiration is directly and expressly asserted. For my own complete satisfaction, I require not an additional particle of evidence. But if, to silence the captiousness of error, I proceed to examine what additional light the Scriptures afford, I am altogether overwhelmed with the mass of evidence brought to bear on the subject. This may be seen fully exhibited in Mr Haldane's Treatise on the Authenticity and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. As I am not now arguing the point, but only shewing the legitimate mode of procedure, in every question with respect to what is taught in Scripture, I decline giving even

an epitome of that evidence. I shall merely suggest one or two things that may be expressed in a few words. Some things in Scripture must necessarily have been inspired in words, as well as thoughts. All prophecies not understood by the Prophets, must have had such an inspiration. Here, then, we have a key to the nature and extent of inspiration. If any other part of the Scriptures are ascribed to a lower degree of inspiration, we are to believe it; but without this, we are to look on *all* as inspired to the same extent, as the same inspiration is equally asserted of *all*. That there are different degrees of inspiration, is not an assertion of the Scriptures themselves, but an arbitrary theory of man. We find again, that the Apostles, on the prospect of appearing before kings and governors, were directed by their Master not to think previously on what they were to say, as they would be supplied with a defence in the moment of trial: "It is not you that speak, but the 'Holy Ghost.'" Now, if verbal inspiration was communicated on such occasions, surely it would not be withheld from the Scriptures, which are to abide to the end of the world.

But instead of proceeding in this way, to inquire of the Scriptures the nature and extent of their inspiration, Dr S. as if they could not settle the question, invents a theory, and forms an inspiration, varying in extent, agreeably to supposed exigencies, without even alleging the colour of Scriptural authority. A plenary verbal inspiration is *unnecessary,—is attended with difficulties,—detracts*

from the authority of translation,—gives weight to objections from various readings,—therefore, there is not a plenary inspiration. Now, admitting all the premises, all of which I deny, I do not admit the conclusion. Human views of what is unnecessary,—the existence of difficulties,—the degree of authority due to translations,—and the weight of objections from various readings, are not a paramount reason to set aside the evidence of Scripture doctrine: but I shall examine his four objections separately.

“The hypothesis,” says Dr Smith, “that, in every case (for in some it was evidently necessary) the identical words were infused into the mind of the inspired writer, appears to me untenable, for these reasons:” Smith’s Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, vol. i. p. 62.

This is not an hypothesis, Dr Smith: it is the express assertion of the Holy Spirit. If Dr S. could shew that the words, 2 Tim. iii. 16, do not imply verbal inspiration, he would show that our interpretation of that passage is wrong; not that our hypothesis is untenable. We form no hypothesis on the subject,—we deny hypothesis,—we abhor hypothesis, with respect to every truth that can be known only by the revelation of God.

“It is an unnecessary supposition. For the divine influence on the mind of the inspired writer would as certainly guide the rational faculty of expression to the adoption of the *best* and *most suitable* terms and phrases, as if the words were dictated to a mere amanuensis.”

I have never met a writer who betrays greater indistinctness in his conceptions than this author. I thought the question was, whether *the very words, all the words* originally written in the Scriptures, were inspired as well as the thoughts. Here the question is shifted, and the matter in doubt is supposed to be, whether the words of Scripture were *infused* by the Spirit, or the inspired writers were certainly guided to the adoption of them. Now, if there is any difference between being guided to use a word, and having that word infused into the mind. I do not think that that difference will be of any avail to Dr S.'s theory. If the divine influence on the mind of the inspired writer, has certainly guided the rational faculty of expression to the adoption of the best and most suitable terms and phrases, then the terms and phrases of Scripture are all given by God. Is this any thing akin to the theory, that in some things the words are left to the writers themselves, or that the inspiration is in the thoughts rather than the words? The theory used in practice, and the theory vindicated, are quite different. The former is designed to afford some relief from the supposed consequences of plenary verbal inspiration; the latter, if it is not really such, is exposed to all its objections. The guiding with certainty to the use of a term, secures it as firmly as infusion. What is guiding to the use of a word, but inspiration?

By the assertion that such a mode of inspiration is unnecessary, the author's scheme requires, not

merely that *certain guidance* will supply the place of *infusion*, but that some things do not require verbal inspiration at all. While the thoughts and sentiments are communicated by the Spirit, the writers may clothe them with expression. Now, complete inspiration is necessary as the ultimate resource in securing us that we have the mind of the Spirit. We may indeed have an inspired *thought* in uninspired *words*, as in translations of the Scriptures; but that we have the inspired thought, cannot be known on the highest evidence, but by knowing the inspired words. How can a thought be known, but by the words that express it? And how can we know that the words express the thoughts of the author, if they are not the words of the author? Had the inspired writers been left to themselves, as to the choice of words in any part of their writings, they might have made a bad choice, and inadequately or erroneously represented the mind of the Spirit. The best writer that ever moved a quill, may often fail in expressing his own sentiments. Instances might be given in which the most learned writers mis-state their own meaning, and sometimes convey no meaning at all. Shall the fishermen of Galilee, then, be supposed equal to express themselves with unerring correctness, if left to their own phraseology?

It may be said, that this invalidates the authority of translations of the Scriptures. And I admit that it does imply, that no uninspired translation can have the same authority of the inspired original. But where is the man that has ever raised transla-

tions to such a rank? The universal consent of controversialists takes this for granted, why then should the abettors of verbal inspiration be taken to account on this head? In determining the meaning of all controverted passages, the last appeal is universally to the original. This is the ultimate ground on which certainty of meaning can be affixed. They who cannot have access to the very words which the Holy Spirit has inspired, have not the highest grounds of certainty as to his meaning. The inferiority of the authority of translations to the inspired original, is a fact that all must equally admit. Dr S. himself asks, if Alethia understands German,—supposing this to be a qualification for the adequate ability of deciding with respect to the sentiments contained in Dr Haffner's Preface to the Bible.

But, while all must admit that uninspired translations have an authority inferior to that of the inspired original, no sound critic can question the adequacy of translation for all essential purposes to the unlearned. The Scriptures are not in a worse condition, on this point, than the classics, and all ancient and foreign books. Every one knows, that to understand what is going on in the Continent, the bulk of the people of this country have no essential need for its languages. Nay, a criminal may be tried for his life, upon the testimony of a witness whose meaning can only be known to the court by interpretation. For the general faithfulness of translations, there may be every testimony that, in human affairs, usually determines opinion

on the most important points. Nor is the learned man himself independent of human testimony: on this ground it is that he knows he has the inspired original. And though he has the inspired original, he has not an inspired or infallible knowledge of that original. In many things, then, he will be liable to mistake the inspired meaning. While he has an undoubted and a very great advantage over the illiterate, he is not without difficulty, nor beyond the reach of error. In judging of the fitness of the modes of communicating divine knowledge, incredulity demands evidence that admits no evasion; and learned Christians often desire to indulge them in this humour. But in this they err, not thoroughly knowing the Scriptures, nor the works of creation and providence. In all God's works there is the impression of his own hand;—not, however, so legible, but chicanery may question it, and plausibly ascribe it to forgery. Infidels demand evidence with respect to the Scriptures, not analogical to that in any other of God's works; and when Christians endeavour to satisfy them in this, they compromise the dignity of their God. Is it not enough that men have the same kind and degree of evidence, with respect to the revealed will of God, that determines them in all other things? Must Jehovah shut up every avenue to evasion, before we will deign to accept his mercy? Salvation is our own concern. Shall we then so doat on damnation, that unless one rise from the dead, we will not believe the message of reconciliation? If the unlearned man rejects the Scriptures

because he has not an inspired translation, his own conduct, in all other things, will attest the justice of his eternal condemnation. To convince him of the duty of receiving his English Bible as a revelation from God, there is no need of teaching him the chimerical theory of an inspiration of meaning, abstracted from the words that convey that meaning, that will diffuse itself, with equal facility and equal authority, through all the metaphrases, translations, and commentaries. It will be perfectly sufficient to shew him that he has the same kind of authority on which he rests his knowledge of all countries, ancient and modern,—and on which depend the most momentous concerns of man.

Let it be observed also, that we have greater evidence of the general correctness and sufficiency of translations, than we could have with respect to the phraseology of the inspired writers, had that been left to themselves. Translations are made by the most learned men of their age and country ; the inspired writers were generally illiterate, and none of them masters of composition. But what is of higher importance, every error supposed to be committed by the original writers, must remain for ever undiscoverable and irremediable ; whereas, if a translation commits an error, it can be corrected by recourse to the original. The inspired original remains a ground-work for reference, with respect to all translations. There can be no such appeal with respect to any blunders of the inspired writers. If they have erred in the choice of a word or phrase, we cannot go up to heaven to have it cor-

rected. The general consent of translations, in representing scriptural truth, is such as to afford evidence of general correctness. It may be said, indeed, that a Bible inspired in thoughts, but uninspired in words, might have been sufficient as to all things essential to salvation, with all the errors contained in the phraseology. I admit it; but would such a Bible be as good a one as that which is verbally inspired? Would such a Bible be God's Scriptures? Could it be said of such a book, that it was all given by inspiration of God? Better to have such a book than no knowledge of salvation, as it would be better to eat bread made of sandy flour, than be starved. But as it would be better to have bread made of pure flour, so it would be better to have an inspired Bible. A Christian going into a heathen country without a copy of the Scriptures, might communicate the knowledge of salvation. But had he with him all the best books that ever were written on Christianity, could they adequately supply the place of the Bible? But what reason can be assigned for such stinginess in the Divine favour? Why does the all-bountiful Author of creation deal out his boons of grace with so niggardly a hand? If he did not employ men to complete his works, why should he to complete his word? Is the Almighty weary in working, that Christians are unwilling to give him unnecessary trouble? Must they enter into minute calculations to ascertain how far they can do without his assistance? Are they determined to refuse from him

every thing which they can hope to want without irreparable loss?

Except it is for the same good-natured purpose, to make the toil of complete inspiration less necessary in God, I cannot see the use of substituting, in some cases, *divine acceptance* of words for *infusion*. According to this scheme there is no need for the inspired writer to trouble the Spirit for the inspiration of every word: On many occasions his own knowledge of phraseology, subject to the Divine inspection, will sufficiently supply him. Such a scheme appears to me too bungling to ascribe to any man of common sense—to ascribe it to Jehovah is, in my view, little less than blasphemy. I acknowledge that if God would accept the words suggested spontaneously, or searched for by the inspired writers, it would come to the same practical issue. A bill accepted is virtually a man's own bill. But to represent a penman of Scripture and the Holy Spirit as working on such a scheme strikes me as so ridiculous, that I cannot look at it but with contempt and abhorrence. Is it to make the work a little easier to Omnipotence, and to save some trouble to Him who wearies not in working, that such a confused and jumbling plan is proposed? What a wonderful interruption in the mental operations of the Apostles when writing or speaking! How many wrong words and phrases, how many inadequate expressions, must be supposed to be presenting themselves to the Holy Spirit for acceptance in the minds of the Apostles! These must all be rejected, and if not replaced by infusion, new ones

must again and again be sought for. If the suitable word is not supplied immediately by the Spirit, the illiterate fishermen might have halted and stammered till eternity, before they would have finished one sermon or one letter. The scheme of acceptance might not have seemed so utterly ridiculous, if God had chosen the most learned men as the writers of Scripture; but with illiterate men, who are almost as ill supplied with terms and phraseology as with ideas, it would be a more tedious process than complete verbal infusion.

This also shews the absurdity of supposing that inspiration of facts, with faithfulness of statement, is all that is necessary for Scripture history. No subject requires a more full supply of phraseology than history. No subject requires more art in the disposing of its matter. So difficult is it, indeed, that few men in all ages have succeeded in it. The historian must be master not only of all things related by him, but he must be supplied with the terms and phraseology that respect all the objects, and all the relations, &c. which are to be represented in his history. Illiterate men have many ideas for which they have no words—learned men themselves are sometimes in the same predicament. Let an illiterate man be inspired with a full knowledge of all the affairs of Britain, throughout all ages, he will still be unfit to write a History of England. He must have a thorough knowledge of the words of the language in which he writes, art to arrange, and what is still more difficult, a fluency of expression, and facility of composition. To

the writers of Scripture history, inspiration of words was as necessary as inspiration of facts. But had they been the most perfect masters of language and composition, to write a history that might be perfectly relied on as a part of the word of God, inspiration of every word was necessary. Let us grant, however, for a moment, that plenary verbal inspiration was not, in our view, essential; is this a reason why we should not receive the obvious testimony of Scripture on this point? Shall we be allowed to be better judges of what is necessary than God? How many things will human wisdom reject in Scripture, if this theory is allowed? Some think a general judgment unnecessary, seeing every man is judged at death; and, according to this theory, they are justifiable in attempting to explain Scripture in conformity with their opinion.

The second objection to plenary inspiration, alleged by Dr S. is—

“ It is attended with extreme difficulties. For
 ‘ example; in two, or three, of the evangelists, we
 ‘ often find the same discourse or sentence of our
 ‘ Lord, expressed by each in different words,
 ‘ though with precisely the same sense. If, then,
 ‘ we demand a verbal inspiration in any one of these
 ‘ cases, we destroy the possibility of it with respect
 ‘ to the correspondent passage.”

Instead of finding extreme difficulties in the things here mentioned, I can feel no respect for the understanding that finds in them any difficulty at all. It is here taken for granted as an

axiom, that two or more accounts of the same thing, differing in phraseology, though substantially agreeing, cannot all be the words of inspiration. Now a very small degree of perspicacity will enable any man to see, that instead of being a necessary truth, this has not the smallest foundation. In relating the same event on several occasions, a narrator may each time use different phraseology; but if his accounts substantially agree, no man will ever charge him with falsehood. A man, even on his oath, being several times called on to relate a fact, will never be found fault with so long as his accounts substantially agree. To attempt exactly the same phraseology, would rather look suspicious. Now, if such is the case among men, why should the Holy Spirit, in relating facts, be bound by different rules? When he speaks in our language, shall he not speak truth, as is required of men? Why should a perfect identity of words be at all aimed at? If the variety of expression in relating the same thing in the gospels, would not affect the truth of the narration, on the supposition that the writers were uninspired men, why should it be thought improper for the Holy Spirit to make use of that variety? Must a different law be prescribed to him when he uses the language of man, from that which binds man himself? The thought is perfectly childish. Let us take as an example one fact differently worded by the four Evangelists—the inscription written over the head of Jesus on the cross: This is Jesus the King of the

Jews, Matth.—The King of the Jews, Mark—This is the King of the Jews, Luke—Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, John. Now I maintain, that as four honest men might have related this fact, with this variety of expression, without any impeachment on their veracity, so may the Holy Spirit. The man who says that it is impossible for any of these accounts but one to be the language of inspiration, virtually asserts that none of them can be the language of truth, but one. If the four accounts are all substantially true, and would not discredit any of four uninspired men, they may, without any disparagement to God, be all the language of the Holy Spirit. In speaking the language of men, his veracity must be tried by the rules of human language. Instead, then, of saying that such a variety of expression in relating this fact, supposes that the words were left to the Evangelists themselves, I will fearlessly assert, that each of the four accounts is verbally the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If the four accounts are true and reconcileable as the language of men, they are equally true and reconcileable as the language of God. It is a hypercritical fastidiousness that demands from God an identity of expression in narration, which truth never demanded from man. From this variety I deduce a far different doctrine from Dr S. As, in the word of God, I perceive a palpable, I may say a designed variety of expression in relating the same thing, I learn from this, that the God of truth sanctions the great principle that is acknowledged by men in ge-

neral with respect to the nature of truth, and gives not his countenance to that affected morality, that, like Dr Smith's, pretends to find imperfection in the smallest instance of verbal variety. We have the authority of the divine example, that *substantial truth is truth*, with whatever variety it may be expressed. Dr S. tells us that, "in two or three of the Evangelists, we often find the same discourse or sentence of our Lord, expressed by each, in different words, though with precisely the same effect." Why, Dr S., should this imply that each may not be the language of the Spirit? If the sense is precisely the same, must the God of truth be forbidden to use a variety of expression, perfectly allowable to man? Yet Dr S., certainly not to the credit of his understanding, infers from the above fact, that, "if we demand a verbal inspiration in any one of these cases, we destroy the possibility with respect to the correspondent passage." I admit this variety, and yet I demand a verbal inspiration, not merely in some one, but in each of the correspondent passages. Any thing that forbids the verbal inspiration, will affect the truth of the relation. If it is truth as the word of an uninspired historian, it certainly is not less truth as the word of God. Dr S. must have very limited views of possibility, when he imagines an impossibility here. It is evident that there is great confusion in his own mind on this subject. The assertion, with respect to possibility, takes it for granted that variety is contradiction. It is evident also, that he looks on variety of expression, in relating the same thing, as

morally faulty, though not in a degree that deserves notice as respects man. Were there not some jumble in his mind of this kind, variety of expression would never strike him as inconsistent with inspiration.

But I have another observation on the doctrine of this objection. It is here positively asserted, that the verbal inspiration of all the Evangelists but one, is impossible. Now, how does this consist with the language of the first objection? In shewing *infusion of words* to be unnecessary, he takes it for granted that the mind of the inspired writer was *certainly guided* to the *best and most suitable* terms. Now I ask, if the evangelists were guided with *certainly*, by divine influence, to the use of the words and phrases employed by them, in all this variety of expression, is not the Holy Spirit as chargeable with the variety, as if he had directly infused the words? If he is innocent as a *guide*, so is he innocent as an *infuser*. This evidently shews that the writer has formed no distinct views on the subject, but floats among clouds and fogs of his own creation, even in that heavenly climate, where godly simplicity would have found meridian light. One other observation on this objection, and I have done. I admit, for argument sake, that the doctrine of plenary inspiration has great difficulties, though I have demonstrated that it has none. What can my opponent make of the admission? Shall the existence of difficulties be a sufficient reason to deny what the Scriptures, with such a mass of evidence, assert? Then give up the sovereignty of

grace; give up particular redemption; give up the divinity of Christ; give up the Scriptures themselves; give up the existence of God. It is a shame for any man acquainted with theology and science, to talk of difficulties as rendering any sentiment untenable. No important subject is free from difficulties, and some of the most important have the most puzzling difficulties. It is evidently the design of the divine procedure, that such difficulties should try the humility and the faith of God's people, while they are as gins and snares to human wisdom. Yet it is not agreeable, even to the wisdom of this world, to deny a doctrine for having difficulties, even great difficulties. In opposition to Dr S. I maintain, with the greatest confidence of conviction, that rational criticism cannot set aside, by difficulties, any doctrine alleging a foundation in Scripture. Though I had been obliged to leave this objection unanswered,—though Dr S. had given me passages which I could not reconcile with the doctrine of verbal inspiration, I would have trampled on his objection as insufficient. There are many difficulties in the Scriptures that may never be solved by man. A resolution to receive no doctrine that has unsolved difficulties, would be a symptom, not of wisdom, but of weakness.

The third objection is, that “it deprives all translations of their claims to the authority of inspiration.” Here, again, the author discovers great confusion in his mode of thinking. Though I do not believe the inspiration of translations, yet such a belief does not result from the doctrine of plenary inspiration, with respect to the original. In-

stead of depriving all translations of a claim to inspiration, this doctrine is perfectly compatible with the supposition, that there might be an inspired translation in every language on earth. We may indeed believe the inspiration of the original, and deny the inspiration of every translation that exists ; but our denying of the latter, is not influenced by our belief of the former. The question of the inspiration of the original, is not affected by the inspiration or non-inspiration of any translation. But let us hear the reason the author gives why this doctrine deprives translations of the authority of inspiration : “ For by the hypothesis the original text alone can possess that authority.” We admit, indeed, that our doctrine implies that the words of the original alone are inspired : does Dr S.’s theory suppose the words of translations to be inspired ? We admit that the inspired thought of the original may be transfused into an uninspired translation ; but that we have the uninspired thought in the translation, we rest on our own knowledge of the original, or on testimony : does Dr Smith’s theory give us greater certainty of having the inspired thought ? Our doctrine is not more unfavourable to the authority of translations than is his hypothesis. He maintains that the thoughts and sentiments, rather than the words, are to be considered inspired. We maintain, as well as he, that the thoughts and sentiments are inspired, and the words also. Now, in a translation, he thinks the thoughts and sentiments may remain, while the words of the original are left behind. What hin-

ders us from thinking the same thing? He brings out inspired thoughts from *uninspired words*; what can prevent us from doing the same from *inspired words*? In holding the inspiration of words, we do not deny the inspiration of thoughts; but Dr S. holds the inspiration of thoughts, and denies the inspiration of words. The difference between us, then, is not that our doctrine gives less authority as regards translation, but that his hypothesis gives less authority as regards the original itself. Our view does not disparage translations more than his, while his view disparages the inspiration of the Bible. If his view approximates the authority of translations, and that of the original, more nearly than ours, it is not by elevating translation, but by lowering the original. The uninspired words of translations, so far as suitable, are brought to a level with the words of the original, by making both uninspired. How can the belief of the inspiration of the words of the original, lessen the authority of a translation? Has not a translation of inspired words as good a claim to authority, as a translation of uninspired words? Was ever any thing so absurd as to suppose, that a translation must lose a portion of its authority by a claim of verbal inspiration in the original? Will not every person, who impartially reflects a moment, be convinced, that we give a higher authority than our opponents, not only to the original, but also to translations? Translations, according to Dr Smith, are translations of uninspired words; according to us, they are translations of inspired words. The

objection proceeds on the absurd supposition, that the belief of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, necessarily implies the denial of the inspiration of thoughts and sentiments. By whatever process he extracts inspired thoughts from uninspired words, surely by a similar process we may extract inspired thoughts from inspired words. Our translation of a book more fully inspired than his, will surely have as much authority as his, that is the translation of a book not so fully inspired. It is an odd theory, indeed, that to detract from the authority of the original, is to add to that of the translation.

But what can be more logical than Dr Smith's conclusion? Verbal inspiration deprives translations of a claim to inspiration; for our translations are not verbally inspired. This, however, is but a specious sophism. It confounds inspiration of thoughts with inspiration of words. Of what kind of inspiration does this view deprive translations? of words only. But does Dr Smith give inspiration of words to translations? Does his theory give inspiration to translations that he acknowledges to be uninspired? Can his theory give a more full inspiration to the thoughts and sentiments, as contained in translations, than ours? How, then, does verbal inspiration deprive translations of a claim to inspiration? It denies them inspiration in no sense in which Dr Smith claims it. This formidable objection, then, amounts to no more, than that, if the words of Scripture in the original are inspired, they are of more authority than the words of any

uninspired translation, a truth which I suppose no man ever thought of calling in question.

These observations will prepare us to bear the shock of the astounding consequences, that the learned doctor draws from our doctrine. "Hence 'it would follow,'" says he, "that the general body of Christians, who are under a necessity of depending on translations, are in fact destitute of any inspired Scriptures." What a dreadful abyss is this into which we have plunged the greater part of the Christian world! How wofully have I been mistaken! I had thought that my doctrine on this point was not only equally innocent with that of my opponents, but had consoled myself, that by coming forward in this controversy, I was pleading the cause of both God and his people. But now I find that I am labouring only to deprive the bulk of my fellow-creatures of the inspired Scriptures. Never was there a greater disappointment. But before I admit these frightful consequences, let me make an effort to avoid them. According to our view, it is alleged that the unlearned are destitute of the inspired Scriptures. Destitute they are indeed of an inspired translation of the Scriptures, and destitute in this respect, I presume, as fully on Dr Smith's plan as on ours, and I have shewn something more so. Will Dr Smith have the goodness to point out, in what respects the translation can be called the inspired Scriptures according to his view of inspiration, in which they cannot be so called according to ours? There is a difference of authority, between the original and uninspired

translations. But it is not necessary that I should discuss this in this controversy, Dr Smith and all others must confess this. I presume there never was a Biblical critic so foolish, as to put an uninspired translation on a level with the inspired original. In whatever sense Dr Smith's theory can allow the English Bible to be the inspired Scriptures, our doctrine can allow this in still a higher sense.

But if the objection as to the authority of uninspired translations is valid, then, according to Dr Smith's own views, we have in translations no inspired Scriptures, as far as concerns all those parts in which he admits that verbal inspiration was necessary. He admits the necessity of verbal inspiration, in conveying prophecies not understood by the prophet. Now in translations, either these are not inspired Scriptures, or if they are, all Scripture may have been verbally inspired, yet in translation be considered inspired Scripture. What is true as to any portion, may be true as to the whole. His own admissions, then, refute his theory.

The most formidable view of the objection, however, is still to come. "The consequence," he observes, "will also reach still higher. As the discourses of our Lord were delivered in the vernacular tongue of Judea, the recitals of them in the Greek gospels, cannot be the very words which he used, but must be translations." Here is a tremendous consequence of verbal inspiration. By the wicked doctrine, that God, in revealing his will to men, uses his own words, we deprive not only the unlearned of inspired Scriptures, but we do not

leave a Bible even to the learned themselves. Really I could not have apprehended any such dreadful evil, from allowing God to use his own words in communicating his own mind. It is a shame for a man of learning to throw out sentiments so crude. Surely he ought to have reflected a moment, before he ventured to hazard such paradoxes. Ought not his good sense to have suspected the process of reasoning, that led to draw conclusions so frightful, from premises so harmless. Had he allowed himself coolly to examine his own reasoning, he could not have allowed his mind to be entangled by cobwebs that must break from the lowest exertion of human intellect. I should be surprised if a very child could be imposed on by such reasoning, however unable he might be to unravel the sophistry of it. What is the argument? Our Lord spoke in the vernacular language of Judea, but the gospels relate his discourses in Greek; therefore, on the supposition of verbal inspiration in the speaker, the gospels that speak in Greek cannot be inspired. There is a world of obscurity and silliness in this reasoning. It supposes every translation to be of necessity uninspired. For if it is possible for an inspired translation to be given of an inspired original, why is it taken for granted, that the circumstance of the accounts of our Lord's discourses, being recorded in Greek, forbids the inspiration of those accounts? The words of the evangelist are, indeed, only a translation of the words used by our Lord; but if the Scriptures are inspired, these words are an inspired translation.

What does it concern us, in what language Christ spoke his discourses, if they are recorded to us in an inspired translation? Paul spoke the language of the people whom he addressed,—does this imply that the words that record this in the Acts of the Apostles, are not inspired, because they must be only a translation of the words that Paul used?

But the *consequence* of this objection *works still higher*. Jesus Christ surely spoke by inspiration, his words were verbally the word of God. Now, as we have none of these words, none of his doctrines, but by translation, according to Dr Smith's theory, we are destitute of inspired Scripture with respect to our Lord's doctrine. Should Dr Smith reply, that though we have not the words of Christ, we have the thoughts and sentiments; I subjoin, that this cannot be said by him, consistently with this objection, for that represents verbal inspiration in the original, as destructive of inspiration in the translation. I subjoin further, that if verbal inspiration in Jesus Christ, does not forbid the inspiration of the gospels as to thoughts and sentiments, neither does verbal inspiration in the original, forbid the supposition of having the inspired doctrine of Christ contained in uninspired translations. Dr Smith brings his elephants into the field, but they are so ill disciplined, that instead of trampling down the enemy, they take to flight, and crush his own ranks. The author seems to have lost himself, in an attempt, by a sort of chemical criticism, to reduce all the inspiration of Scripture into the thoughts and sentiments, that

being then sublimated, it may escape evaporation in the words that convey it, and standing wholly unconnected with phraseology, be ready to transfuse itself with equal strength into all other languages, even by uninspired translators.

Granting, however, that a plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures has a more unfavourable aspect towards translations than the opposite sentiment, this is not to be admitted as a paramount objection to a doctrine established by such a weight of evidence from the testimony of God's word. A sound critic would not allow its authority for a moment,—not even in the utmost extent in which it could be supposed true. Whatever are the consequences as to translations, the doctrine of a complete verbal inspiration in the original Scriptures, rests on pillars that hell and earth will never subvert.

The fourth objection that Dr Smith opposes to the doctrine of a plenary verbal inspiration in the Scriptures, is, that—

“ It gives a serious weight to the otherwise nugatory objection against the certainty of the Scriptures, from the existence of various readings. For no person, however well qualified, careful, and impartial, in applying the rules of criticism, could assure himself, and still less could he satisfy others, that he had in every case ascertained with *absolute* certainty, the one genuine reading. But, if we regard the inspiration as attaching to the matter and sentiments rather than to the letters and syllables, the objection is effectually preclud-

‘ ed. It is not in one instance out of five hundred
 ‘ that the diversities of manuscripts and other au-
 ‘ thorities produce the smallest alteration in the ul-
 ‘ timate sense. Thus, in the general course, it is
 ‘ all the same, as to practical effect, which reading
 ‘ is accepted : and criticism is called to put forth its
 ‘ utmost strength only in these few cases in which
 ‘ the meaning is affected.”

Upon this I observe, in the first place, that it virtually excludes verbal inspiration in every instance. Whether it is that the naked sentiment is too shocking for the author himself to contemplate, or whether he wishes to disguise it from his readers, he does not avow his sentiment in the same extent in which his theory holds it. He does not deny verbal inspiration flatly ;—nay, he admits it in some instances. Here he speaks of inspiration attaching to the matter, rather than to the letters and syllables. But he must mean, not inspiration of matter *rather than* of words, but inspiration of matter, *and not* inspiration of words. The force of the objection applies equally to every instance of verbal inspiration. If there is a single verse in Scripture verbally inspired, this objection lies against the credit of that verse. It must either be kept infallibly as free from corruption by transcribers as it was originally pure, else this objection will crush it with its *serious weight*. Now, there is no part of Scripture infallibly free from corruption by transcribers ; therefore, to save the honour of revelation, according to Dr Smith, we cannot suppose an inspired word is in the Bible. But, unfortunately,

this same Dr Smith has admitted, that some parts of Scripture must have been *verbally* inspired; therefore, against all such parts this weighty objection has its full force. My mode of reasoning, whatever may be the canons of Morus, Dæderlein, &c., would be this. As some parts of Scripture must of necessity have been verbally inspired; and as such parts are not better secured against the mistakes of transcribers than the rest, if this objection cannot invalidate the verbal inspiration of the one, neither can it invalidate the inspiration of the other.

Dr Smith's plan for saving the honour of inspiration, reminds me of the way in which the popish persecutors saved the honour of the priesthood; when any of the clergy were to be burned, they stripped them of their office before they committed them to the flames. Just so with Dr Smith and inspiration. To preserve it from disgrace through accidents in transcribing, he removes it from the words of Scripture, and, with all the sublime mystery of the schoolmen, places it incomprehensibly in the thoughts and sentiments. Should any bold unbeliever ask, How can it be known that the inspired sentiment is expressed with infallible correctness, if the words are not also inspired? The best answer is, It is a mystery, it is all a mystery.

But these apprehensions of Dr Smith are altogether visionary. Instead of giving a serious weight to the objection referred to, the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration adds not a particle to its weight. I maintain, that it is no way connected with such an

objection ; and that to view it in this light, betrays a mind destitute in a more than ordinary degree, of critical discrimination. "No person," it is said, "however well qualified, careful, and impartial, in applying the rules of criticism, could assure himself, and still less could he satisfy others, that he had in every case ascertained, with *absolute* certainty, the one genuine reading." Granted ; fully granted. But what then ? What makes such a thing necessary, in order to defend verbal inspiration ? Does the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration imply, that our copies must infallibly contain the pure original in every instance ? It does not, Dr Smith. It asserts that the Scriptures, as God gave them, were his, not only in matter, but in every word of them. But this by no means implies, that the present copies are, in every instance, perfectly correspondent with the original. The permanency of the purity of the divine word, was committed to the care of his Providence, in the use of the ordinary means, by which he can always perfectly secure his purposes. There is indeed every reason, *a priori*, to think, that God would not suffer his word to be essentially corrupted ; and as Dr Smith himself admits, there is from fact the most satisfactory evidence that he has not permitted it to be materially corrupted. But the doctrine of verbal inspiration has nothing to do with this, whatever may be the extent of corruption by transcribers. If any man were so mad as to argue, that every word in our Greek New Testament is infallibly the same with that originally given by God, the various

readings to which Dr Smith refers, would be an answer to such a madman. But to point to the various readings as an objection to the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, as they came from God, is to confound two things entirely distinct and independent of each other. Nor does our doctrine make a single corruption more than Dr S.'s theory: nor does the assertion, that the original word, whose place the corrupted word now fills, was an inspired word, cause greater incertitude with respect to the true meaning, than the opinion that it was uninspired. On the other hand, this theory, in order to save the Scriptures from the disgrace of losing a few inspired words, degrades them from the rank of verbal inspiration, and leaves us to gather the truth of God out of the words of men. Both of us must acknowledge the fact to the same extent. To suppose that the lost words were God's own words, is no more injury to what remains, than to suppose that they were man's words. On the other hand, this hideous theory robs us of the rapturous consolation, that we have in the original of the Scriptures the very words of God, with the few trifling exceptions alluded to. Would it be a greater benefit to have all the words of Scripture human, than to have them all divine, with the exception of a few unimportant variations? If the loss of a few unimportant words, considered as divine, is an injury to the Bible, is not the loss of all the words of Scripture, as inspired, infinitely a greater loss? To save the loss of some trifling articles, Dr Smith sinks the ship with all its

*Very forcible and
conclusive
reasoning.*

treasures. To prevent the disgrace of losing a few inspired words, he divests the Scriptures of verbal inspiration. We have incomparably the best Bible. Every word of our Bible was God's, as it was first delivered. Dr Smith's Bible was never any thing but human in language. We have still the same Bible, with a few trifling exceptions. Dr Smith's Bible has lost no divine words, because it never possessed any. The very worst part of our Bible is as good now, as the very best of Dr Smith's ever was.

The doctrine, then, of plenary verbal inspiration, stands clear of every solid objection. All the ingenuity of this learned writer has not been able to devise any thing that will fairly bear on the subject. His objections are so very inapplicable, that I cannot bring myself to believe, that any man of a discriminating mind ever really laboured under their weight. They appear rather to have been sought by study, to justify a sentiment originating in some other cause. They are more like the forced thoughts of declamation, when it strains to make the best of a bad cause, than the serious scruples of a sound mind. Had he given up a fortress committed to him by his sovereign, to forces so inconsiderable, there could not have been found a court-martial in the empire that would not have doomed him to lose his head. The doctrine of verbal inspiration is one of the fortresses committed to Christians by Jesus Christ. Dr Smith cries "mercy," and strikes his colours to a most contemptible enemy, without ever firing a gun. Had he mustered the royal forces,

and come to an actual engagement with the squalid foe, he would have put him to flight at the first fire. He would have found the enemy totally without ammunition. There might be indeed as much powder as would enable him to puff a little, but not to do any execution.

This theory, indeed, is one of the most inexcusable that ever was forged for the interpretation of Scripture. On most occasions men are tempted to form theories from the real difficulties of the case, and from some appearance of Scriptural assertion. Plausible objections may be alleged from the Scriptures against the doctrine of the Trinity itself; and it requires solid criticism to give a satisfactory answer to the Arian in the interpretation of some passages. But against the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, there is not even alleged the assertion of a single passage of the book of God. Does the truth of any thing contained in Scripture, require this theory? Is it called for by any apparent contradiction? Is it the only way to solve some insuperable difficulty? No such thing. Never was error more inexcusable; for never was error less provoked by difficulty, or less sheltered by appearance of Scriptural assertion. Where is the passage that has the most remote appearance of teaching the doctrine contended for by this writer? Frightened by the phantoms that himself has conjured up, to escape them he plunges over a precipice. Plenary verbal inspiration is asserted by the Scriptures,—such inspiration is necessary to perfect security in conveying the mind of the Spirit,—to such in-

spiration there is not in Scripture one even apparently contradictory expression, with such inspiration, there is nothing inconsistent in their contents,—to reject such inspiration, then, on the stress of the objections alleged by this writer, is contrary to the first principles of evidence.

Having now examined the objections on the authority of which Dr Smith rejects the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, I shall attend to his remarks on the noted passage, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, which are as follows :

“ That from a child thou hast known the holy writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every writing divinely inspired [is] also profitable for instruction, for conviction [of error], for recovery [to that which is right], for training up in righteousness.” It appears to me impossible to establish, from the Greek text alone, so as to preclude all fair objection, either side of the agitated question, whether *θεόπνευστος* agrees immediately with *πασα γραφή*, or is (as it is translated in the common version and in many others) a part of the predicate. But I apprehend that the scale is turned in favour of the other construction by the evidence of the venerable Syriac Version, whose antiquity is almost, if not quite, apostolic. It reads, “ And that, from thy childhood, thou hast known the holy books,” &c.—“ for every writing which has been written by the Spirit, is valuable for instruction,” &c. The Vulgate confirms this interpretation :—“ Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata, utilis est ad docendum,” &c. It is evident that the Apostle, in v. 16, resumes distributively what he had before advanced collectively : so that “ every writing divinely inspired” is a description by which the apostle designates *each and every one* of the writings comprized under the well-under-

stood collective denomination, τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα, the holy writings. Timothy, and every contemporary Jew or Christian, needed no explanation of this phrase. They knew it, as one of the most common terms of usage, to denote the γραφαί, writings, or scriptures, to which the Lord Jesus was in the habit of referring, as to the ultimate divine authority (e. g. Mat. xxii. 29. xxvi. 54. Luke xxiv. 32.), the searching of which he enjoined (John v. 39.), and which it is impossible to suppose, with any shadow of reason, that he did not design to use in the sense in which he knew that all his hearers would understand him; namely, as expressive of the whole sacred canon of the Jews, for to them “were entrusted the oracles of God.” (Rom. iii. 2.) The general tenor of the New Testament most clearly recognizes, under these descriptions, the whole *received* scriptures of the Jewish nation: and, when a particular passage is cited, it is usual to refer to it in the singular number: ἡ γραφή, ἡ γραφή αὐτή, and ἑτέρα γραφή, the writing, or scripture, this scripture, another scripture, (John xix. 24, 37. Mark xii. 10.)

Thus the passage before us, though we adopt that construction of θεοπνευστος, which Unitarians generally approve, furnishes the strongest testimony to the *inspiration* of each and every of the books of the Old Testament. The importance of this conclusion, in relation to our present subject, and to every other part of the controversy with the Unitarians, needs not to be pointed out.”—*Smith's Testimony to the Messiah*, Vol. i. p. 27, 28.

It is satisfactory to find, that even admitting the translation of the passage preferred by Dr S. to be irrefragably proved, it has no colour of opposition to plenary verbal inspiration. This translation, as plainly as the other, asserts the verbal inspiration of every thing inspired. “Every writing divinely in-

‘spired,’ verbally declares that the writing, that is, the words written, are inspired. If any writing is inspired, the words must of necessity be inspired, because the words are the writing. The Syriac Translation implies this as fully as ours. The Bible is said to be *a writing written by the Spirit of God*. A more express attestation of verbal inspiration could not be found.

The only point of view, then, in which we need examine this translation, is its bearing on the Unitarian controversy. And it is very satisfactory to find, that though he prefers the Unitarian construction of this verse, Dr Smith decidedly opposes the Unitarian import of it. While, therefore, I am happy to find Dr Smith and myself on the same side on this important matter, I will take the liberty to suggest to him a few things to invalidate the reasons of his preference of the Unitarian construction of this verse. Though I blame him very much for his excessive partiality for learned men, and his pernicious theorising on Scripture,—that he is a learned, ingenious, and deeply read theologian, I cheerfully acknowledge, and I would gladly bring him over altogether to the right side. I observe then, in the first place, that if the ambiguity, in the construction of this passage, exists to the extent that Dr Smith alleges, that is to say, if there be a passage in Scripture so ambiguous, that neither the connexion, nor any other resource, furnished by the Scriptures themselves, will fix its definite meaning, I maintain that we are so far without revelation, and

that such a passage of Scripture might as well never have been written. There may be, and there confessedly are, passages in the Bible, which are not understood. But it is not because they contain in themselves what necessarily renders them unintelligible, as Dr Smith virtually asserts respecting the passage in question; an assertion, than which it is not easy to conceive a greater indignity to the language of Holy Writ. If the Scriptures are really such a book, a pope we must have. Surely the word of God was not given but to be understood! And if it does not afford evidence to explain itself, it is not sufficient.

I remark farther, that the Syriac version, and the unanimous consent of all uninspired versions, cannot legitimately be acknowledged as authority to fix the meaning of phraseology indeterminate in itself. They afford us nothing more than the opinion of their authors; and though they lived among the Apostles, if they are not inspired, they may have been mistaken. To justify an opinion as having apostolic authority, it is not enough to shew that it was professed by some person in the age of the Apostles; it must be shewn to have been approved by the Apostles. Some opinions we know to have been entertained by Christians in the very times of the Apostles, which were contrary to the apostolic doctrine. I care not how high is the date of the Syriac version; if it is not inspired, I will take the liberty of questioning its propriety. Still less can I admit the paramount authority of the Vulgate. If we are not prepared to adopt all its errors, let us

not claim its patronage in a particular emergency. A degree of countenance may, no doubt, be claimed from reputable translations, which will be increased by the antiquity, learning, and impartiality of the authors. But it never can be legitimately allowed to be decisive. Such authority is to be referred to, not so much to establish an opinion, as to shew that a translation has not been made for the occasion. If, in supporting any of my opinions, I differ from the common version of the Scriptures, a suspicion ought to rest upon every man's mind, that I have made my translation to cover my opinion. Now, to do away this impression, it is very material for me to shew that I am not singular in the translation; and that others, well acquainted with the language, have adopted the same interpretation, although they did not entertain such opinion. In this way, if the Syriac version actually favoured the Unitarian sentiment with respect to inspiration, it would be of very great importance for them to allege its authority. Such a use may be made of the authority of versions; but a casting vote never can be justly allowed them. If, then, it is impossible to ascertain the construction of these words from the text itself, no uninspired version can ever authoritatively fix it.

If the translation is to be made from the words of the common copies, there seems no difficulty in the construction. The substantive verb is naturally to be understood to each of the adjectives. What reason can be given for giving it to one, and withholding it from the other? And why should

we adopt a various reading in order to create a difficulty? If the substantive verb is to be taken into the text between the two adjectives, it is naturally to be construed with the first, and understood to the last. It is not the natural darkness of the construction that has caused the various interpretation of this passage, but disaffection to the truth contained in it. Men who are conscious of holding opinions that the Scriptures condemn, yet are anxious to obtain the sanction of their authority; or at least, to remove the most conspicuous passages that oppose them, would gladly limit the inspiration of the Holy Book. All their efforts, then, are directed to pervert the testimony of this glorious declaration. If they cannot force it to prevaricate or bear false witness, nothing can protect their impious sentiments from the open reprobation of God.

It may be observed also, that according to the Unitarian construction, the particle *ky* is rather cumbersome than useful. It is very difficult to dispose of it to any good purpose, or to assign it an office in which it will not be troublesome as well as useless. In the translation, "for all divinely inspired Scripture is *even* useful," the word *even*, instead of contributing a portion to the sense, essentially misrepresents it. To translate the conjunction *ky* *also*, as Dr S. does, is not so bad, but still not at all satisfactory. Its application is dubious,—and its import not easily perceived. It is well known, that on some occasions, it will admit this translation; but to argue, that because it ought, in some places, to have this acceptance, it may

have it in any other, according as it may suit the purposes of the critic, is not sound criticism. To justify such a signification here, it is not enough to produce examples in which it has such a signification; it is necessary also, to produce the authority of similar constructions. This is a canon of criticism which may be easily defended;—a canon, however, little respected by biblical interpreters. What word does Dr S. mean the conjunction to affect? What is the precise effect he understands it to have on the meaning? This unfortunate *ky* in the Unitarian construction, is treated as poor Bâtier was treated in the 10th Hussars. The royal commission, indeed, has given it a seat at the mess, but all the dignity of that commission has failed to procure it the attention of the company. It is doomed to sit unregarded;—it speaks, but no one hears.

Though I perfectly agree with the learned writer, that the Unitarian interpretation does not follow from the admission of the Unitarian construction of this verse, yet, for the above reasons, I prefer the common translation. And though we can still maintain the fortress, though we give up this out-work, I do not think we ought to give up the most unimportant battery, while we are able to fire a gun from it. A consciousness of sufficient remaining resources, and an affectation of excessive candour, may influence us sometimes to give up to the adversary what is perfectly tenable. It is right to make concessions for a moment, to give

the enemy a more signal defeat. But an inch of Scriptural ground is worth eternal war.

Let us now view this passage on the Unitarian construction. And while I agree with the learned writer in the result, I differ from him in the way of obtaining that result. I have objections to his translation, to his paraphrase, and to his reasoning. His translation is at variance with his reasoning. He very justly argues that the phrase *παρα γραφῆς* refers to every book of the Old Testament, as being notoriously the most appropriated to that sense. If so, *every writing* is not adequate as a translation of the above phrase. Though *writing* is a literal translation of *γραφῆς*, it is not a proper, because not a determinate translation of it here. For, as in the original, *γραφῆς* is here taken in its appropriate sense, its translation must correspond to it, not in its literal, but in its appropriate sense. As *writing* has not such an appropriation in English, it is not an adequate translation, although perfectly literal. *Scripture* ought to have been the word, for it has in English exactly the same appropriated meaning that *γραφῆς* has in the original. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a translation is good, according as it is literal. It may be asserted, without exception, that a literal translation of any book cannot be a faithful one. If the word is not used in its literal sense in the original, it is a mistranslation of it to translate it literally. This is a canon of biblical interpretation of universal application, and of the greatest moment—a canon not only often violated, but to violate which is, in the estima-

tion of some translators, the highest praise. A translation of this kind, instead of conveying the original with additional light, is perfectly unintelligible. When *ta iera grammata* is translated *holy writings*, as Dr S. translates the words, there is not the smallest objection; because what is indefinite in the word *writings*, is rendered completely definite by the epithet *holy*. His language can bear this, and *holy writ*, and the *sacred writings*, are phrases as definite as the appropriated word *Scriptures*.

Dr Smith justly understands *Theopneustos* as descriptive of *pasa graphe*. But it is not descriptive of it when translated *every writing*; because every writing is not *Theopneustos*, inspired. It is descriptive of *graphe* only in the appropriated sense of that term. *Every scripture* is divinely inspired, but *every writing* is not. According to Dr Smith's translation, it is essentially necessary to understand *Theopneustos* not as a description, but as a limitation—not *every writing*, because it is divinely inspired, but *every writing* that is inspired, or as far as it is inspired. Dr Smith's translation, then, is at war with his sense of the passage.

I have an objection also to his paraphrase. The supplementary matter connecting *pasa graphe* with the assertion *is divinely inspired*, ought not to be *which is*, but *because it is*, or *as being*, or some phrase assigning a reason. The Vulgate, indeed, adopts this construction, but it does not sanction this interpretation. “ *Omnis Scriptura divi-*

* *nitus inspirata*," ought not to be translated, " All Scripture *which is* divinely inspired," but " All Scripture divinely inspired," and should be paraphrased *as it is* divinely inspired, or by some supplementary words indicative of description. As the Vulgate does not design to exclude the inspiration from any part of Scripture, but to assign the reason of the reading of it being profitable, the supplement should not be a limiting phrase, but a descriptive one. " All Scripture, *because it is* inspired by God, is profitable," &c. The Syriac version is not an exact translation, according to any reading of the text; it is rather a paraphrase. If, in the expression, " Every writing which has been written by the Spirit," the phrase *every writing* is understood in its general sense, then the passage cannot be descriptive; for *every writing* is not divinely inspired. If by *every writing* is meant every book of Scripture, as Dr Smith seems to understand the translation, then the translation into English should not have been *every writing*, but *every Scripture*.

Dr Smith states, very correctly, that the terms *graphe*, *graphai*, and *iera grammata*, are all appropriated, in the most decided and notorious manner, to signify the inspired writings of the Old Testament; and he reasons, very justly, that it is impossible for it to have any other signification here, as Timothy, and every Jew or Christian, needed no explanation of these phrases. This is a most decisive and conclusive argument against all those who, with Dr Smith himself, object to the inspi-

ration of particular passages in books confessedly inspired; but I object to the conclusiveness of his reasoning, when he rests on this fact, the certainty of the inspiration of "each and every of the books of the Old Testament." In my judgment, the decidedly appropriated sense of the term *graphe*, can afford no assistance in proving that these books were inspired. A Unitarian may reply, "I fully grant that these phrases designate the books of the Old Testament, but I deny that this admits their inspiration. For any thing that can be learned from the appropriations, there may not be a line of inspiration in the whole." Now, to such a man I have nothing to reply. With respect to the passage under consideration, the Unitarian might observe, "I acknowledge that Paul here uses the term *graphe* in its appropriated sense; he does not, however, assert inspiration of *all Scripture*, but that all Scripture which is inspired is profitable," &c. Now, that his reasoning is false, is not proved by reference to the appropriated meaning of *graphe*, nor from the paraphrase by which he expresses his meaning of the text, in which also he agrees with Dr Smith, but by shewing, as I have done, the true and natural supplementary matter to be descriptive, and not limiting. That this interpretation of the Unitarian is false, might also be solidly proved by the absurdity to which it leads. It supposes that there must be a standard or criterion by which, in reading the Scriptures, we may distinguish what is inspired from what is uninspired. If there is no such

criterion, we cannot make the proper use of what is inspired. Now, as no such criterion is given in Scripture, there cannot be need for such criterion. This is an axiom—the man who refuses it is not worth reasoning with; he ought to be given up as a hypochondriac, or as a man who perversely denies first principles, without which there can be no reasoning. If it is said that we may form a criterion for ourselves, I reply that such criterion may be false; and at best, is but human, and can have no authority with ourselves, and much less with others.

While, therefore, I hold with Dr Smith, “that
 ‘ the passage before us, though we adopt that
 ‘ construction of *Theopneustos*, which Unitarians
 ‘ generally approve, furnishes the strongest testimo-
 ‘ ny to the *inspiration* of each and every of the
 ‘ books of the Old Testament,” I do not think
 that the strength of the evidence is brought out in
 his translation, or paraphrase or reasoning.

But it is not only of advantage, it seems to have the Bible disincumbered of a useless load of inspiration as to words; it will be still more eminently improved, by expelling inspiration from those trivial unimportant passages, in which the inspired writers have impertinently foisted in matters too undignified for divine influences. Dr S. quotes the following passage from Parry on Inspiration.

“ If the inspiration and guidance of the Spirit, respecting the writers of the New Testament, extended only to what appears to be its proper province, matters of a religious and moral nature; then there is no necessity to ask, whether *every*

thing contained in their writings were suggested immediately by the Spirit or not : whether Luke were inspired to say, that the ship in which he sailed with Paul, was wrecked on the island of Melita, (Acts xxviii. 1.) : or whether Paul were under the guidance of the Spirit, in directing Timothy to bring with him the cloak which he left at Troas, and the books, but especially the parchments, (2 Tim. iv. 13.) ; for the answer is obvious, these were not things of a religious nature, and no inspiration was necessary concerning them. The inspired writers sometimes mention common occurrences or things in an incidental manner, as any other plain and faithful men might do. Although, therefore, such things may be found in parts of the evangelic history, or in epistles addressed to churches or individuals, and may stand connected with important declarations concerning Christian doctrine or duty, yet it is not necessary to suppose, that they were under any *supernatural* influence in mentioning such common or civil affairs, though they were, as to all the sentiments they inculcated respecting religion.”—*Vol. p. 65.*

Now, to refute this impious theory, nothing more is required, than to quote Dr S.’s observations on 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.; and to me it is perfectly astonishing, that the learned writer did not see the inconsistency between this and his views of that important passage. If “each and every of the books ‘of Scripture’ are inspired, how is it that any part of these books can be uninspired? This is a problem that Dr S. must solve, for he holds both sides of the contradiction. If “all Scripture” is inspired, nothing uninspired can belong to writings called Scripture. We have only to enquire, then, whether such things are found in books called Scripture, of which, without exception, inspiration is asserted :

but to say that a book is inspired, and that a part of it is uninspired, is a contradiction. That may be true of a part which is not true of the whole; but what is true of the whole, must be true of every part. The doctrine here inculcated, then, is not only untrue, but absurd.

The proper province of inspiration, as we are told, is confined to things of a moral and religious nature. The proper province of inspiration, I maintain, is every part of a book declared by God to be inspired. It is the proper province of every writer to be pledged for every thing in the book which he authenticates by his name. Would I permit an amanuensis to foist in, under my name, every thing he chose to communicate to the public? And if I adopt any thing from him, am I not pledged for it as my own? Shall the inspired writers, then, take a liberty with God, that would be utterly unwarrantable with man? Is it not the province of God to be the author of every part of the book which he recognises as his own writing? For an amanuensis to foist in any thing not inspired, would be downright forgery. If there are some things unfit for inspiration, such things should not have a place among things inspired, so as to make a part of a book of which inspiration is, without exception, asserted. Had God permitted such a heterogeneous mixture to be given to the world, than which nothing can be more absurd to suppose, he would not have allowed the whole to be designated by his name. And he would doubtless have given a criterion to distinguish what is divine from what is

human. That no such thing is the case, beside the absurdity of the thing, there is the highest evidence in the fact, that no such criterion is given by God. But what God has not done, Mr Parry has kindly condescended to perform for him. Impious mortals! will men never learn to give the Almighty his own place? Will the Pharisees never cease, by their traditions, to make void the law of God? Were such a discrimination necessary in the book of God, would it be left to men to form the criterion? If such a creterion is necessary in reading the Scriptures, and if no such criterion is given, the Scriptures are an insufficient rule. Why shall we not, then, admit the traditions of papal Rome, as well as the theories of presumptuous Protestant theologians? If Mr Parry has a right to make one criterion, has not Dr Priestly a right to make another? If the former is permitted, by his theory, to purge the Scriptures of certain useless though harmless excrescences, shall not the latter be equally entitled to devise a theory, that will expel all doctrines supposed to be derogatory to human understanding? If the smallest license of this kind is permitted, nothing shall be left as God's in the Scriptures, that atheistical impudence shall think fit to question. The inspiration of Luke in writing the account of the shipwreck, and that of Paul in writing for the cloak and parchments, stand on the same foundation as their inspiration in recording the plan of salvation. Nor are these facts, and all similar ones, destitute of religious instruction. But to be able to shew this is not necessary for the vin-

dication of their inspiration. That they are inspired, is ascertained by their being found in a book that is divinely attested as inspired. The plan that sound criticism would pursue, is not to read in order to discriminate in the Scriptures by a human theory, what is divine from what is human, but to read every verse as the dictate of God, and endeavour to find out the religious use that the Holy Spirit intended that we should derive from it. Admitting that in some things we should not be successful, whether is it more rational to reject such things as not being given by inspiration of God, or to suppose that the divine word may contain treasures that we are not able perfectly to exhaust? Is it modest to say, that a passage can have no religious use, if we cannot immediately perceive that use? No, it is not modest, it is atheistical, it is irrational. For my own part, there is not one of those parts of Scripture, that human wisdom has objected to, in which I have not admired the divine wisdom. Instruction is abundantly conveyed in them, and in a way that shows the Scriptures to be divine. One of these passages, (2 Tim. iv. 13.) that this learned writer is unwilling to dignify as a part of the revelation of God, I have known a very learned clergyman of the Church of England, Dr Stokes, to choose as the text of a sermon, which he preached at a visitation of the Bishop of Derry. That in which Mr Parry and Dr Smith can find no religious instruction, Dr Stokes, as learned as any of them, considered as full of instruction for all the clergy of a diocese. And, in-

deed, many of these things that captiousness and learned ignorance are so much inclined to disrelish, may be shewn to be the most conspicuous indications of authenticity. God hath said, "The meek will I guide in judgment." Is it any wonder, then, that men who search the Scriptures with the arrogance of inquisitors, should, as to the wisdom and application of many things, be sent empty away? These haughty doctors do not sit humbly at the feet of Jesus to learn, but with their self-invented standards, impiously seat themselves above him.

"This view of the subject," we are told, "will also enable a plain Christian, in reading his New Testament, to distinguish what he is to consider as inspired truth. Every thing which the Apostles have written or taught concerning Christianity; every thing which teaches him a religious sentiment or a branch of duty, he must consider as divinely true, as the mind and will of God, recorded under the direction and guidance of his Spirit. It is not necessary that he should inquire, whether what the Apostles taught be true. All that he has to search after is, their meaning; and when he understands what they meant, he may rest assured, that meaning is consistent with the will of God, is divine infallible truth. The testimony of men who spoke and wrote by the Spirit of God, is the testimony of God himself; and the testimony of the God of Truth is the strongest, and most indubitable of all demonstration."

What silliness, arrogance, and impiety is here! And have plain Christians for eighteen centuries been reading the Scriptures, in which some things are divine, and some things are human, without any

criterion to distinguish? Has this ingenious divine succeeded at last in discovering the longitude? Was the world in darkness till the rising of this star? What pity that the author had not been born many ages sooner! What a loss to mankind, that *his view* was so long in making its appearance! The want of this discovery, has subjected plain Christians in all the previous ages of Christianity, to confound the word of God with what is merely human. Can there be an instance of more insufferable arrogance and folly? A view that suggests itself after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, is necessary to enable men to read the Bible so as to ascertain what in it belongs to God! Without this, men cannot properly discriminate what is the Bible! And dare any wretched mortal presume to give a criterion of discrimination, in determining the authority of what is contained in the book of God? Impious men, give your assistance to the Almighty and the all-wise in the plans of creation and providence, where your folly cannot mar the comfort of the plain Christian. But foist not your theories on the volume that contains the words of eternal life, and the instructions of heavenly wisdom. Rob not the unlearned Christian of the cheering conviction, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Let your impious ingenuity gather laurels in the legitimate fields of invention; try your powers in the arts and sciences, and by your sagacity rival the glory of the inventor of the steam engine. But leave the poor Christian his Bible whole and entire.

Seek not to bewilder him by your *ignis fatuus*,—darken him not by your discoveries,—impoverish him not, by bestowing on him your riches. I have no language in which I can adequately express my abhorrence of such a theory, while it is impossible to restrain emotions of contempt for its folly. What blasphemy and absurdity are implied in the idea of a plan for enabling plain Christians to distinguish what belongs to God, in the book that God himself calls his own word! Can the man who has made, or those who adopt this theory, quarrel with Arians, who give a similar new guide to direct plain Christians to discriminate in the Scriptures what is important or fundamental truth, from what is uncertain, unimportant, and speculative? Nothing, say they, can be fundamental truth, but what is found in each of the gospels. By such infidel criterions, men continue to reprobate every thing in the Scriptures which they dislike.

But of what service is this theory, even were it admitted? It is utterly indefinite. What will appear to have religious instruction to one, will have none to another; and as every man must be guided in this by his own view, every one will have a Bible longer or shorter according to his opinions and taste. Besides, on such points there will be no possibility of coming to one judgment, for there is no common standard. That which these two learned theologians look on as so utterly without interest, we have seen another writer, equally learned, admiring as a manifestation of divine wisdom, and a proof of the divine perfection of the book of God. And how

easy will it be, according to this scheme, to discredit any part of Scripture, by alleging that it is only a matter of speculation, not of essential faith? Were all men to adopt this theory, they would be as far as ever from being brought to agreement by it.

Upon the supposition, that the "common and 'civil affairs'" mentioned in the Scriptures, are to be considered in no point of view as things of a religious nature, and consequently not inspired, there is a door opened for the introduction into the book of God, of as much uninspired matter as the discretion of the writers might think fit to insert. If, without inspiration, they might introduce one sentence or observation, they might have added a thousand volumes on the same principle. What havoc does this theory make on the word of God?

This discovery is also applied to settle the question, with respect to the inspiration of Paul, in what is taught in the seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

"The above view of the apostolic inspiration will likewise enable us, as I apprehend, to understand the Apostle Paul, in the seventh chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, where in some verses he seems to speak as if he were not inspired, and in others as if he were. Concerning some things, he saith, "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment:" (ver. 6.) and again, "I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." (ver. 25.) The subject of which the Apostle here delivers his opinion, was a matter of Christian prudence, in which the

Corinthians had desired his advice. But it was not a part of religious sentiment or practice; it was not a branch of Christian doctrine or duty, but merely a casuistical question of prudence, with relation to the distress which persecution then occasioned. Paul, therefore, agreeably to their request, gives them his opinion as a faithful man: but he guards them against supposing, that he was under divine inspiration in that opinion, lest their consciences should be shackled, and leaves them at liberty to follow his advice or not, as they might find convenient. Yet he intimates that he had "the Spirit of the Lord" as a Christian teacher; that he had not said any thing contrary to his will; and that the opinion which he gave was, on the whole, advisable "in the present distress." But the Apostle's declaration, that as to this particular matter, he spoke "by permission, and not of commandment," strongly implies, that in other things, in things really of a religious nature, he did speak by commandment from the Lord. Accordingly, in the same chapter, when he had occasion to speak of what was matter of moral duty, he immediately claimed to be under divine direction in what he wrote. "And unto the married I command, yet not I but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband." (1 Cor. vii. 10.) This would be a breach of one of the chief obligations of morality, and therefore Paul interdicts it under the divine authority. Respecting indifferent things, he gave his judgment as a wise and faithful friend; but respecting the things of religion, he spake and wrote as an Apostle of Jesus Christ, under the direction and guidance of his Spirit." —*Parry's Inquiry*, p. 26—30.

A very satisfactory defence of the inspiration of the Apostle on this occasion, may be found in the "*Authenticity and Inspiration of the Scriptures*," by Mr Haldane,—a defence so full, as, in my ap-

prehension, not to admit a single additional observation. But in order to cut down these impious theories, I will, for argument's sake, admit the failure, and shew that even this does not concede the consequence with respect to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. If the Apostle guards us against the supposition of his inspiration on this point, then, doubtless, every thing is to be taken as inspired, when there is no such intimation. The message about the cloak and the parchments, the medical advice to Timothy, and the many common and trivial incidents mentioned in his letters, have their claims to inspiration more fully authenticated. All we lose is inspired direction on one point, in which, according to the hypothesis, inspiration is expressly disclaimed. But I go further. Admitting that Paul disclaims inspiration on this point, I maintain that the chapter containing the admission, as a part of Scripture, is inspired equally with any chapter in the Bible. Though he were not inspired to decide the question, he was inspired to write the account which he has given of the matter. If the Apostle has told us that he is not inspired on this point, he has been inspired to make the denial. Not a line has he written in that chapter, that is not immediately from the Holy Ghost. Gamaliel was not inspired, but inspiration has recorded his advice; and that document, as recorded by the Holy Spirit, suggests inspired instruction to us.

Dr Smith, you are engaged in a very unholy cause,—your genius and learning are very ill employed. By excluding the Song of Solomon, you

I cannot see how this view of inspiration goes higher than that against which he is contending. What does the writer mean by "inspired instruction" suggested to us? Gamaliel himself, was not inspired. Does he mean then that we are inspired in the inferences that we may draw from his uninspired advice? If not I cannot understand his meaning. He has been contending for the inspiration of the very writing itself—now it is for the instructions suggested to us by that writing. In the former case the Scriptures are the

unsettle the canon of Scripture, and unhinge the mind of simple Christians, by your speculations. You have denied the verbal inspiration of the word of God, and every kind of inspiration to all the passages that any one may chuse to consider not of a religious or moral nature. Your speculations are very crude,—your sentiments are self-contradictory,—and your half-formed conceptions shew that you have been too hasty in giving your opinions to the world. You must go back or forward,—stationary you cannot remain. Make the best use of your learning, but humble yourself before God, and seek more of the teaching of his Spirit in the reading of his word. Without much learning, it is impossible to be a Biblical critic; but all the learning of Bentley will be insufficient, without that child-like disposition of the wisdom given from on high, which teaches to cry, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is a better model for a Christian minister than Dr Haffner, the learned professor of Strasburgh.

As might be expected, the unhallowed theory of inspiration adopted by Dr Smith, leads to a devastation of the Scriptures, to which no bounds can be assigned. It is a gangrene that will gradually spread until it eats the very vitals of Christianity. Inspiration is first denied to the words, next to such things as relate to common and civil affairs: from this the progress to the non-inspiration of whole books of Scripture is perfectly easy and natural. So far, it appears, the disease has spread its baleful contagion in some professedly evangelical wri-

ters of the present day. An article has appeared in the *Ecclectic Review* for November 1825,* in which the inspiration of several books of Scripture is denied; and, as has been stated in the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, the divine origin of no less than one hundred and forty chapters of the Bible has been impugned. In this article we have the following passage.

“ If the books of Proverbs and Solomon’s Song can be proved to be inspired, it is not, we apprehend, on the ground of either external or internal evidence, but on that of the inspired character attaching to their royal author. That God was the author of his wisdom, we know, as the Holy Spirit is the author of all true wisdom, the inspirer of “ all good counsels” as well as of “ all holy desires and just works.” But, whether he was “ moved by the Holy Ghost” in penning those compositions, or rather in speaking the proverbs ascribed to him, is not so certain as to rank among articles of faith. There appears to us far stronger ground for believing that “ Ezra the priest, the scribe,” acted and spake under the guidance of inspiration; but it is observable, that he is never spoken of as a prophet, nor does he lay claim to that character. Even, however, admitting both Solomon and Ezra to have been inspired men, it would be very difficult, we conceive, to prove, that this character attached to the anonymous authors of the book of Esther and the books of Chronicles. We must therefore still contend, that these books, though very properly included in our canon as both authentic and

* In the first edition of this Review, it was stated, that Dr Smith was said to be the author of this paper. But that gentleman has disclaimed it. I wish I could also add that he disclaims all tampering with the Sacred Canon.

true, "are possibly not inspired;" and that the question whether they are so or not, comes within the proper range of human opinion."

To enter into the proof of the inspiration of these books, so rashly questioned by this writer, would be altogether a waste of time in this place. It will be perfectly sufficient to shew that Dr Smith cannot consistently question it. The business may be effectually done from his own admissions. He strongly contends that 2 Tim. iii. 15. 16, asserts the inspiration *of each and every* of the books comprised under the well understood collective denomination, *Ta iera grammata*, the Holy Writings: and that even the Unitarian construction of that passage furnishes "the strongest testimony to the inspiration of each and every of the books of the Old Testament." Now we have only to ask, were the above books a part of the Old Testament when Paul wrote that Epistle, in order to be completely assured that they are inspired? Were they a part of that collection called Scripture, the Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures, the oracles of God, &c.? If they were, their inspiration is unquestionable. To settle this question, it is only necessary to know the Jewish canon. If Dr S. can deny the inspiration of any book of the Old Testament, in accordance with his own explanation of 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. it requires more perspicacity than I possess, to discern the agreement. Should he say that he cannot see any thing in these books that can entitle them to the denomination, Scripture, Holy Writings, oracles of God, &c.; this might be

very becoming in the mouth of an infidel, but is very inconsistent in the mouth of him who admits them to be a part of the Jewish Canon; and who applies the assertion of Paul, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, to every part of that canon. Nothing can be more absurd than to apply Paul's assertion of inspiration to each and every book of a well known collective denomination, and afterwards to refuse it to certain books unquestionably contained in that collection. Can they be a part of the collection, and not deserve the commendation bestowed on every part of that collection? How can he refuse them the denomination of Scripture, after saying that the meaning of that well understood collective denomination, every Jew and Christian recognised as including *the Scriptures to which Jesus was in the habit of referring, as to the ultimate divine authority?* How can he question the inspiration of some books of the Old Testament, after asserting that 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. furnishes the strongest testimony to the *inspiration* of each and every of the books of the Old Testament? Were not these books, books of the Old Testament? To admit the canon to apply (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) to every book of the canon, and yet to question the inspiration of some of the books of that canon, would be an instance of absurdity and contradiction to be matched only in the doctrine of transubstantiation. A deist might consistently admit the canon, and labour to shew, from the contents of any particular book, that it could not be inspired. This would not only be consistent, but effectually serviceable to

his cause. Could he succeed in shewing that a certain book belongs to the collective denomination received by the Jews as Scripture ; and that it contained evidence of non-inspiration, he would prove Paul a liar, (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) and discredit the inspiration of every other book in the canon. If one part of the volume attested as inspired by Paul, be proved to be uninspired, his attestation is worthless with respect to every book in the collection. The writer of this article then, is not only inconsistent with Dr Smith in this matter, but actually labours in the cause of infidelity, with respect to Revelation in general. As far as the authority of the canon, and the general attestation of inspiration are concerned, both the authenticity and inspiration of the whole Scriptures are subverted. For if the canon has admitted one uninspired book, there is no security that it has not admitted more : if that canon has been recognised by Jesus with one uninspired book, every book in the collection may be uninspired, notwithstanding that recognition : if Paul (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) asserts inspiration of the whole volume, while one book is uninspired, no book in the volume can be allowed currency from his stamp. If he has sealed one forger, the great seals should be put in other hands. I am unwilling to suspect Dr Smith of secretly designing to undermine the authority of the Scripture ; yet as he excludes the Song of Solomon, I cannot clear him, but at the expense of his judgment. I cannot see how a man of sound understanding can apply 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. to each and every book of

a collection, while he denies inspiration to any book, unquestionably contained in that collection.

The doctrine of the writer of the article under review, is a perfect absurdity. He tells us, that the book of Esther, and the books of Chronicles, though not inspired, are "very properly included 'in our canon, as both authentic and true.'" Now, what canon? The answer is self-evident: Canon of Scripture. What other canon is the writer here concerned with? Included in the canon of Scripture, while they are not Scripture! Included in a canon to which they do not belong! Included in the canon of inspired books, while they are not inspired! As well may the writer be included in the peerage, while he is not a peer, or be enrolled among crowned heads, while he is but a subject. Include the writings of men among the writings of God, under one designation! Was ever absurdity more monstrous? I had thought that the Church of Rome had exhausted all the mines of absurdity; but it seems there are some rich veins of unappropriated ore, left to be worked by Protestant divines for the support of sophistry. The authenticity of a book does not entitle it to be taken into the canon of Scripture. Mathematical demonstrations have no more right to a place in the canon of the holy books, than the most extravagant romance. They are truths, but they are not the truths written by the Spirit of God, for the spiritual instruction of mankind. The Jewish canon was the canon of Scripture, not the canon of authentic books in general. Our canon is the canon of the books

acknowledged as inspired, not the canon of all true history; the writer's canon would include all the authentic history of all ages and countries. Is not a canon a rule? And what rule ought any uninspired book to be in the things of God? Now, let me ask him, could you seriously think of placing in our Bible all authentic records? If not, why do you give a place to the book of Esther, and the books of the Chronicles, which in your opinion are uninspired? Would you call such a collection the Bible, the Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures, &c.? I thank thee, great Jesus, that thou hast not left the making of our Bible to the ingenuity of learned doctors. Much of thy wisdom in it, appears to them to be folly. Their learning is employed in mending thy work, and polishing what thy hand has left unfinished. Go, vain man, enrol thy name with that of him, who, in the arrogance of his wisdom, boasted that he could have given a better model for creation, had he been admitted to the divine counsels. But let the Bible alone. It is the very wisdom of wisdom. The blemishes that the wisdom of this world finds in it, are often its greatest excellencies.

Let us examine a little farther this writer's principles of evidence, as furnished by this passage. Though he denies these books as inspired, he acknowledges them as *authentic and true*. Now, how does he know them to be authentic and true, independently of their being a part of the canon, whose inspiration is asserted by Paul? Who is the voucher for the *wicked Jew* who wrote the

book of Esther? What other authentic documents prove every part of this narrative? If there is a single fact in it uncorroborated by other unsuspecting testimony, it stands unaccredited, and the admitted wickedness of its author levels it to the rank of a romance. If it was written by a wicked Jew, we may be sure that he has falsified. We cannot depend on a single fact recorded. Was it ever known that a wicked Jew could write a page of truth, when the interest of his country would be served by a lie? Believe the narrative of a wicked Jew about his religion and country? Go, then, to the Jesuits for the authentic annals of Christianity. Swallow all the fables of popish miracles. Receive, as the truth of God, every adventure in the lives and legends of the saints. Then, that the renowned St Dunstan held the devil by the nose, at the door of his cave, till he made all the rocks, hills, and vallies to re-echo his horrible bellowing, will become a matter of sober history.

How very easily is this writer satisfied with evidence of authenticity, contrasted with his obstinacy with respect to inspiration. Inspiration he denies to these books, though they are part of a canon, to the whole of which inspiration is expressly ascribed by an inspired apostle. Their authenticity he grants without evidence, though, abstracted from their inspiration, there is the strongest reason to suspect them of imposture. Now, my view of evidence leads me to admit their inspiration, from their being part of a canon, to every part of which inspiration is ascribed by an Apostle, and to

recognize their authenticity, as they are inspired. Their being in the canon, is the chief proof of their authenticity. Of the authenticity of some books, there might be no other evidence than the fact that they are in the canon. I know the history of the Old Testament to be true, because it is inspired; take away its inspiration, and you remove the strongest evidence of its authenticity.

Now, instead of resting the whole proof of the inspiration of these books on the general inspired character of their author, I rest no part of it on this ground. Indeed, the evidence that Solomon was an inspired man, is, that he wrote these books. Even had we known him to have unquestionably written books acknowledged by all to be inspired, we would not rest the inspiration of these books on that ground. This argument might go a certain length towards proof; but the main evidence would be, that these books were a part of the Jewish canon, recognised by our Lord, and to every part of which inspiration is ascribed by the Apostle Paul. There may be additional evidences, external and internal, but this is a pivot, that without any other support, will bear the whole weight of their inspiration. That Solomon was "moved by 'the Holy Ghost in penning these compositions,'" is matter of Christian faith, as well as that Paul was so moved to write his epistles.

It would be still more difficult, in this writer's estimation to prove the inspiration of the book of Esther, and the books of Chronicles. Not in the least more difficult. Do they belong to the canon, *each and every*

book of which is asserted by Paul to be inspired? Here is no second question. The author appears to labour under a mistake with respect to the nature of the proof of inspiration. He appears to make little or no account of the authority of the canon, though authenticated by the highest possible sanction. After the fullest evidence of such a title, other evidence, external and internal, seems to be considered as assential before its recognition. Now, to me it is quite obvious, that when a book has the authority of the canon so augustly sanctioned, it needs to a Christian no other recommendation. To him it ceases to stand on its trial. To question it further, is to suspect the guarantee of Jesus and his Apostles. We may add to its proofs, for the sake of confounding infidelity; but to refuse our own assent till they are produced, is most criminal unbelief.

With respect to internal evidence, nothing can be more satisfactory than when a book of Scripture, by the nature and excellence of its contents, proves its origin to be divine. This is eminently to be found in the holy books. But let it be observed, that this is not essential in every book, and that the nature of some books altogether precludes it. Books of genealogies, and other matters, have their use in the inspired volume. But how could genealogical tables prove the inspiration by internal evidence? These tables may be taken verbally and literally from public documents; but as they are inserted in the inspired volume, they have the seal of inspiration. Internal evidence, essentially re-

quisite in a revelation, is only negative. A divinely inspired book can contain nothing that is inconsistent with the divine perfections, as revealed in the gospel. But when a book is proved by external evidence, it is absurd to suppose that it can contain internal evidence to disprove itself. When, therefore, a book is proved by external evidence to be inspired, wisdom directs us to be very cautious in pronouncing its contents to be unfit for the matter of revelation. Such a book could not have external evidence. To judge rashly in this way, is to rush on the buckler of the Almighty. It is the very sin of our first parents,—the sin that the wicked one is still prompting men to commit,—to be as gods, knowing good and evil. Does vain man consider himself a perfect judge of what in all cases is fit for God to write? Is he able to give counsel to the perfection of wisdom? Must revelation come up in all things to his ideas of propriety? Must the Almighty conform himself to his standard? How disgusting to the mind of an humble Christian, to hear presumptuous men dictating on the nature of divine revelation, as if they were equal to God? Their pure minds take offence at the grossness of the word of him in whose sight the heavens are not pure. It is awful presumption to pretend to be disgusted with the Song of Solomon, when it is found in the canon of the word of God. Whatever my own judgment might be, if left to determine, *a priori*, of the nature of this book, when I find it among the books that composed the Jewish canon, sanctioned by Jesus, and declared by Paul

to be inspired, instead of indulging my ingenuity in finding out an evil tendency in it, I set myself to discover its wisdom, and reap the instruction and comfort it is calculated to afford. In this view, I am persuaded, every humble Christian will find it a part of the treasures of infinite wisdom. The spirit that rejects it is a spirit of infidelity; and though this writer indulges it only in denying a few of the books of inspiration, it is the very same spirit that works in the complete infidel, in denying the whole word of God. To deny the whole volume of inspiration, would not require the adoption of any additional principle; it would only be necessary to act more fully up to it.

If there is any thing in the books of Chronicles, the wisdom of which, humility, patience, and labour cannot discover, I am convinced that there is more good sense, as well as piety, in the observation of Mr Scot, than in the fastidiousness of this writer: "If we could not understand, or get any benefit from certain portions of the Scriptures, it would be more reasonable," says that pious man, "to blame our own dulness, than, so much as in thought, to censure them as useless." This is a sentiment that breathes the true spirit of Christianity.

Instead of finding cause of quarrel with the book of Esther, it is a part of Scripture that I have long admired as super-eminently abounding with proofs of a divine origin. I see in it the characteristic features of the divine wisdom, and every where discover traces of the finger of God. It is to me a

key to the history of the world, and an inspired commentary on the book of Providence. From this I am taught to see the hand of God in the minutest concerns of my life, as well as in guiding the wheels of empire. When storms and darkness thicken over my head, from the book of Esther I am led to hope that they may break around me in blessings, or at least be dispersed without doing me injury. When this book is commended to me by the canon approved by Jesus, shall I give up to hypercritical fastidiousness, all the consolation which it affords me? He that robs me of my money steals trash; but he that robs me of any part of the word of God, takes from me what all the earth cannot replace. Learned men, in the wantonness of their genius, may think it a very harmless thing to question our title to some parts of the domains left us by our Lord. In the sport of criticism, they may give away tracts of Scripture territory with much less concern than an amateur would the picture assigned to an admired artist, or than a scholar would give up an ode of Horace. But a Christian, acting fully in the spirit of Christianity, will cling to every word of the Holy Book, and guard it as a miser guards his treasures. The Scriptures are the title-deeds of his estate; and he will, with the utmost care, preserve every line and every word from erasure.

The omission complained of in the Book of Esther, is quite analogous to the providence of God which it illustrates. It is in the characteristic style of Divine Wisdom. Divine Providence rules all

the events of this world ; but he guides the universe with an unseen hand. Though his friends see his hand in every thing, his enemies see him not at all. In all the operations of his wisdom and power, they perceive nothing but chance and confusion. Fortune is the goddess which they put in the place of the God of Providence. They are like children beholding the movements of puppets. The hand behind the curtain is never suspected. A leaf cannot move on a branch—no living creature can draw breath, without the operation of the divine hand ; yet are the most wonderful interpositions of his providence unnoticed by the wisdom of this world. God is hidden from the eyes of men, even while he is every where at work before their face. Is there any need for a voice from heaven to proclaim, on every occasion, “It is God that performs this ?” Is it not self-evident to every creature truly wise ? Are not all inexcusable who do not acknowledge his over-ruling power ? Must a herald proclaim him the author of his works, before men are blameable in ascribing them to another cause ? Is he so bad a painter that the style of his works is not characteristic of their author ? Is he so little known in the world, that witnesses must be brought into court to prove his hand-writing ? If there is a human creature, possessed of all the faculties of man, who is unacquainted with the hand-writing of God, he is a guilty creature. Innumerable examples of it have, from his infancy, been before his eyes. And why should not the Book of Esther be in the style of the hand-writing of that Providence,

whose wonders it exhibits? Both are anonymous letters; but they are letters which heaven and earth could not counterfeit. The hand-writing proves its author. To ascribe the Book of Esther to a wicked Jew, is as void of foundation, as to ascribe the works of Providence to the devil.

Had we written the book of Esther, no doubt our wisdom would have expressed our whole creed, guarded at all points by logical definition, to cut off pretence for evasion. The feeblest pin would have afforded a hold for all the weight of our orthodoxy. But it is not so with the wisdom of God. The truth, in all its bearings, is not exhibited in any single passage in the Bible. To have a complete view of it, we must bring together passages scattered throughout the whole Scriptures. The Book of Esther is designed for a particular purpose; it is sufficient that it serves that purpose. As a part of the sacred volume, it is admirably instructive; it never was designed to stand alone. The preaching of Jesus himself could not stand the test to which this writer subjects the Book of Esther. He did not, in every address, bring forward the doctrine of salvation. The book of Esther teaches the truth as far as it goes; it is no degradation to it that it leaves the most important thing to be gathered by inference. Even by itself, its meaning cannot be innocently mistaken; but, in conjunction with the other books of Scripture, all appearance of cover is removed. Is it not sufficient if the whole Scriptures contain the whole will of God? Shall we arrogantly prescribe to him what

is requisite in every part? While the way of salvation is dispersed in multitudes of places through the Bible, many passages might be collected in which there is nothing about it.

I implore such writers to reflect on the awful nature of their sentiments. If this book is inspired, and, if Dr Smith's explanation of 2 Timothy iii. 16 be correct, inspired it must be, how highly audacious is it to ascribe it to some wicked Jew! If, in their judgment, it contains evidence of being the work of a wicked author, do they not find that wickedness in God, should the book be finally acknowledged by God? Is there hazard here? Is not rashness on such a point the extravagance of madness? If the work is charged as a wicked work, and God is found to be its author, is not God charged with its wickedness? I admit that the writer does not intentionally make such a charge. But does this clear him? If so, the Jews will be innocent in rejecting the gospel; for they conceive that it led to licentiousness. If so, the modern revilers of salvation, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, will all stand without blame; for they oppose it out of zeal for the interests of good works. Has the man of sin opposed the truth, as being the doctrine of Christ, and the true gospel? Does he not view the gospel of the grace of God as the heresy of wicked men, seduced by the devil? Yet he is the son of perdition, the smoke of whose torment ascendeth for ever and ever. And is it a light thing upon the strength of rash objections, to affront the Spirit of truth, and ascribe,

though ignorantly, any part of the word of God to wicked men? If this charge is unfounded, even though not intended as against God, it argues disaffection to the divine wisdom. What is unbelief but disaffection to the wisdom of God? Men reject the gospel, because, indulging their own wisdom, the wisdom of God appears foolishness to them. Instead of submitting to the plan of divine wisdom, when communicated to them, they take on them to question its merits; and finding it altogether opposed to their own views, they reject it as an imposture, or explain it in conformity with the wisdom of man. Had the gospel appeared the wisdom of God, in the estimation of the princes of this world, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. They did this in ignorance,—because the wisdom of God is foolishness to the world; but this ignorance, as it was enmity against the wisdom of God, which nothing but atheistical pride of human wisdom could have kept them from discerning, was culpable in the highest degree. This ignorance was damnation. Now, if the book of Esther is really written in the wisdom of God, it will be no defence for this writer, that it is not in the style of human wisdom. God has presented it to him as his own work, by having it inserted in the canon sanctioned by Christ, and attested as inspired by Paul. If, in the arrogance of his own wisdom, he presumes to see defects in it, notwithstanding such attestation, it is at his peril he rejects it. He indulges the very same spirit that induces all unbelievers to reject the gospel. Do I then say,

that to deny the inspiration of this book is damnation? No—I say it is not damnation; because no ignorance or opposition to the divine wisdom is damnation, but the ignorance of one point—the ignorance of the wisdom of God in the plan of salvation. This ignorance is declared by God to be damnation. But ignorance of every other part of the divine wisdom is not damnation; because it is declared that he that believeth the gospel shall be saved. It could not be a truth to which there is no exception, that the belief of the gospel is salvation, if any ignorance consistent with the knowledge of this one point, was damnation. But while I rejoice in this fact so comforting to us all, for none of us are without our errors and ignorance, I think it right to keep it constantly before my own mind, and that of all my brethren, that every instance of disaffection to the divine wisdom is highly criminal. It is this that has introduced all the corruptions of the gospel; it is this that has changed all the ordinances of God, and introduced into nominal Christianity all the pomp and ceremony of pagan Rome. I am convinced that many in the Church of Rome, with all the ignorance of the divine wisdom that keeps them there, may have so much knowledge of the wisdom of God in the plan of salvation, as will wash them in the blood of Christ, and at last present them blameless before his throne. But while I think so, I do not on that account think their ignorance innocent, nor cease to cry to them in the words of the Lord, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins,

‘ and that ye receive not of her plagues.’ In like manner do I judge of the denial of the inspiration of the book of Esther, on the considerations of its supposed defects. It appears to me exceedingly sinful, without the alleviating circumstances of prejudice, education, &c. that weigh on the Roman Catholic. Were the objection a thousand times more plausible than it is, prudence, I think, should dictate very great caution in condemning. Had the objection struck me as it did the writer of the article, instead of rashly yielding to it, my reason teaches me, that as the book is authenticated by God, I should have sought by reading and prayer, to see the divine wisdom of that which in my wisdom did not appear such. Instead of boldly concluding from first sight, that this was evidence of a wicked author, I would have taken it for granted, that there was wisdom in it, though I could not discern that wisdom. In this way, I have no doubt, I would have come to see the wisdom of that which might at first strike me as folly. As I am man, and not God, I never pretend to judge for God. All his ways, I take it for granted, are wise, and my wisdom is to search for the traces of that wisdom. In sitting down to a human writing, I try every thing with the utmost circumspection and jealousy. In re-perusing my own writings, I do the same, because to err is human. But when I sit down to the Scriptures, it is not with the eye of a critic to find faults, nor as a judge to put them on their trial at the bar of my own wisdom. As I have the fullest evidence that they are the word

of God, I read to learn,—I read to explore the divine wisdom,—I read to discover what may lie hid from human wisdom. As the Scriptures are the word of God, I expect such a fulness and perfection in them, that I may dig up treasures that may have yet escaped the eye of human wisdom. Having found the key of the divine wisdom in the Scriptures, I apply it every where; and the marked characteristics of that wisdom, are to me the best commentary on the book of God, both of Scripture and providence. It is in this way, that the thing that has stumbled this writer, has long appeared to me as a certain evidence of the divine origin of the book of Esther. Whether his scepticism, or my faith, is more suitable to human weakness, I might leave to the determination of every humble Christian. At all events, I triumph in the appeal to the throne of the eternal judge, for the decision of this controversy.

I request the writer's attention to another consequence of the sentiment advanced by him on the subject of the inspiration of the objected books. He lays a foundation for infidelity, with respect to the denial of the inspired books, to any extent that a person may choose to build on it. He is himself displeased only with a few books; but if his principles are admitted, I do not know how any book can be retained. The authority of the canon, with all its sanctions, he does not admit as paramount; and the non-conformity of its matter to his own views, is allowed as sufficient to discredit the title of a book to the character of inspiration. How

then can any book of Scripture stand such an ordeal? A thousand things in the epistles may more plausibly be objected to, than the defect complained of in the book of Esther. So far from the absence of the name God, proving irresistibly that none but a wicked Jew could have written that book, it appears to me, on the contrary, that had a wicked Jew really been the author, it would have possessed the perfection, the want of which the writer so much regrets. How could either the honour, or the safety of the Jewish people, or any single Jew, be hazarded by the avowal, that the governor of the universe was their protector and avenger? But at all events, in whatever way human wisdom would decide on this question, to deny the inspiration of a book so highly sanctioned on the ground of speculations of this kind, appears to me to be the very wantonness of sceptical folly. Such evidence as that on which this writer rests, would not be sufficient to displace from his works any of the orations usually ascribed to Demosthenes. To reject the book of Esther on such evidence, is the very madness of criticism. Admit such principles, and who shall defend the inspiration of Paul against the Arians and Socinians? Who shall be able to defend, in the writings of that Apostle, the inspiration of those deep things of God, that appear as hard sayings to the wisdom of this world? Every man may innocently reject whatever is displeasing to his own mind. In this way our Bible will not contain a single page whose

inspiration will be universally admitted. All will be matter of human opinion.

Nor will the writer be able to keep the exact station which he has now chosen. He will either be obliged to come back to us, or the infidel will force him nearer to himself. Let him not vainly imagine, that by throwing the objected books overboard, he will be able to keep the ship from sinking, and save the rest. When he offers to surrender these books to the deist, if he knows his business, he will not take them from him. He may reply, these books that you give up to me, are authenticated by him you call your Master, and by him you denominate the great Apostle of the Gentiles. You must acknowledge them as yours, or you must surrender at discretion, and give me up all the writings of Paul, and all the authority of Jesus. If the one falls, the other will fall of course. Who can depend on Jesus, if he has acknowledged the authority of a book, which you and I have found to be the writing of a wicked Jew? What credit can be given to Paul, if he has so egregiously erred about these books?

What an unholy cause are these writers engaged in! They are labouring as fervently in lowering the character of the word of God, as the Neologians are labouring to sap the foundations of christianity, under a mask of submission to its authority. Dr Smith struggles hard to degrade the inspiration of the Scriptures; and both he and the Ecclectic Review have laboured to unsettle the canon. Both have adopted principles which tend to confusion; and to the sub-

version of the Scriptures as the BOOK OF GOD. Dr Smith has denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and every kind of inspiration to all the passages that any one may choose to consider as not being of a religious or moral nature; and the Eclectic Review has rejected whole books of Scripture, on principles that will condemn every book in the canon. Better, much better for a christian, that he had not so much learning as to write his own name, than to display the abilities of Newton, in degrading the word of God. Grotius is said to have exclaimed on his death-bed : *Heu vitam pre-didi officiose nihil agendo : Alas ! I have spent my life in laboriously doing nothing.* But many learned Christians not only waste their time in laborious trifles, but in ignorantly fighting against God. How much confusion has been brought on divine truth, by the waywardness even of the disciples of the Lord ! How much obscurity has been introduced into the plainest subjects, by perverted ingenuity ! How much error arises from not reading the Scriptures with the disposition of little children ! When will Christians learn to renounce their own wisdom ! When will they cease to conform the Scriptures to their own views ! When will learned Christians seek the approbation of God in all their labours, regardless of the smiles and of the frowns of a world that lieth in the wicked one ! When will truth be esteemed the most precious of all possessions ! “ Thy testimonies ‘ have I taken as an heritage for ever ;” says the Psalmist, “ for they are the rejoicing of my heart.”

APPENDIX

TO

REMARKS

ON

DR PYE SMITH'S THEORY OF INSPIRATION.

DR Pye Smith, in a second edition of his work on the Messiah, has endeavoured, from the import of the word λογος, to silence some of the testimonies for verbal inspiration. "Much stress," says he, "has been laid on the use of the expressions mentioned before, (p. 45.) where *speaking, saying,* and the like, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit *by the mouth* of his servants; and such passages as these, 'I will put my *words* in his mouth.' Deut. xviii. 18. 'I have given unto them the *words* which thou gavest me,' John xvii. 8. 'We speak, not in the *words* which man's wisdom teacheth, but in those which the Holy Spirit teacheth,' 1 Cor. ii. 13. Those who use this argument are probably not acquainted with the Scriptural meanings of דבר and λογος, especially the plural forms, and the idioms connected with them; that they denote, not *vocables*, or *single*

‘ words, but *combined speech*, the *matter* conveyed
 ‘ in the *tenor* and *total* of an oral or written address,
 ‘ *sermones, la parole.*” vol. 1. p. 97. The peculiarity here adverted to, as far as it is well founded, can be news to no classical scholar. And it is equally obvious to the smallest degree of critical discernment, that this fact cannot bear the inference which Dr Smith draws from it. Even admitting that דבר and λογος never did refer to single terms, the conclusion is not warranted. If *sentences, expressions, or combined speech*, are ascribed to God, the single words must be his also, for it is of these the combination is composed. The whole cannot be God’s, if the parts separately are not his. Dr Smith’s criticism is as absurd, as if one should say, that when an officer is said to be the colonel of such a regiment, it does not import that he is the colonel of the soldiers in that regiment, because the word regiment denotes a body of men united. An oration of Demosthenes is called λογος. But if an oration as a whole is his, the words considered separately, are his also. We do not argue that it signifies single terms as distinguished from terms combined in speech; but that signifying terms combined in speech, it includes single terms. If God is the author of the terms as a combination, he is the author of them considered singly. What we contend for is, that λογος, whether referring to one word, or to a number in combination, refers to *expression*, and that in this respect it is as definite as *εφημα* itself. λογος when used distinctively, implies expression with respect to a number of words com-

bined ; *ῥημα*, expression with respect to one word. But though *λογος* has this distinctive meaning, it is not fact that either it or the Hebrew word *דבר*, is never used with respect to single words. Many examples might be produced to prove the contrary. Joshua viii. 34, 35, “ And afterwards he read *all* ‘ *the words* of the law, the blessings and cursings, ‘ according to all that is written in the book of the ‘ law. There was not *a word* of all that Moses ‘ commanded, which Joshua read not before all the ‘ congregation of Israel.”

Here the term *word* must signify a single word, yet the Hebrew is *דבר*, for which the Septuagint uses *ῥημα*.

Isaiah xxxvi. 21. “ But they held their peace, ‘ and answered him not a word.” Here the term *word* applies to a single word, yet the Hebrew has *דבר*, and the Greek *λογος*.

Psalms cxxxix. 4. “ For there is not a *word* in ‘ my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it alto- ‘ gether.” Here the Hebrew uses *מלה*, and the Greek *λογος*.

Isaiah xxix. 21. “ That make a man an offender ‘ for *a word*.” Here there can be no doubt, that a single word is meant, yet we have in the Hebrew and in the Greek, the terms in question.

Rev. xxii. 22. “ If any man shall take away from ‘ *the words* of the book of this prophecy.” Here the original has *λογος*, yet it must refer to single terms.

But in this criticism, Dr Smith artfully substitutes the words, “ The *matter* conveyed,” &c. as synonymous with the words “ *combined speech*.”

Now the matter conveyed in a speech is not the speech that conveys that matter. The speech contains both the words and the matter, but not the matter without the words, nor distinguished from the words. Though, therefore, *λογος* signifies *combined speech*, a *sentence*, an *oration*, a *treatise*, &c. yet it never signifies the matter of that sentence, oration, treatise, &c. without the words, or distinct from the words. It includes the matter, because the words express the matter. It is admitted, that both the Hebrew word and the Greek have an acceptation, without any reference to expression; but in that acceptation it is evident, they cannot be used in the passages in question. In such instances, they do not denote the meaning or *matter* of a speech, more than the words of a speech. They do not, indeed, refer to speech in any point of view. Let us now take a look at the examples which he alleges as the support of this criticism. "Of this they might discover evidence, if they would examine, in the Hebrew and Greek texts, the following passages, which are but a specimen of a very numerous body. 'Exod. xviii. 16, 19, 22, 26; xix. 6—9; 2 Sam. xi. 18; Ps. cv. 27; Jer. i. 1; Amos i. 1; 1 Chron. xxix. 29; Mark i. 45; John iv. 37, 39; Acts i. 1; xv. 32; xx. 7; 1 Cor. i. 17, 18; ii. 1, 4; xv. 2,' &c. &c." Let us examine them as they stand, and we shall see that they give no testimony that will yield any support to Dr Smith's criticism. Exod. xviii. 16, 19, 22, 26. "When they have a *matter* they come unto me,"—"bring the *causes* unto God,"—"every *great matter* they shall bring unto

‘thee,’—“ the hard causes they brought unto ‘Moses.’” Here the Hebrew word דבר is used to denote *matter, thing, cause*. But this does not conform to either part of the definition of the word given by Dr Smith. This is not *combined speech*, nor is it “ the *matter* conveyed in the *tenor* and ‘total of an oral or written address.’” It is *matter, thing, cause*, without respect to speech. It is only a play upon the sound of the word *matter*. It makes *matter* as an abstract word, coincide with *matter*, as importing meaning, which are as different in their significations as any two words in the language. And it is most strange that Dr Smith has not observed, that in this acceptation of the Hebrew term, the Septuagint has used *ῥημα*, as well as *λογος*, as a translation. In verse 16, the Greek is *ἀντιλογία*, a *controversy*; in verse 19, the Greek is *λογος*; and in verse 22, 26, *ῥημα* is used. Indeed *ῥημα* is the term used for *thing*, in Luke ii. 15. In this acceptation then, *ῥημα* and *λογος* are equally used. In the sense of *combined speech*, both *ῥημα* and *επος*, are used as well as *λογος*, though when used distinctively, each has its peculiar province. *λογος* has a greater variety of significations than any of its synonyms. There is no doubt, but there is a connection between the remotest of these and the original idea; and it is the business of the philosophical linguist to trace this connection. But the fact is all we are concerned with, that it has the meaning of *matter, cause, thing, office*, as well as the corresponding Hebrew term, without any reference to speech at all. In this, however, *ῥημα*

has suffered the same extension. Indeed, the origin of this use is not difficult to discover. What can be more obvious, than a metonymy of the expression for the thing expressed, and in progress, the passing of the metonymical use into proper signification, without any reference to expression? Why, I ask, has Dr Smith grounded an argument upon this use of λογος, which might as well be grounded on ρημα, the very term which distinctly denotes words as single terms? Might not another as reasonably say, “ ρημα signifies *matter*, ‘*thing*, &c. therefore it cannot be understood of ‘single words.” This definition, then, is inconsistent with itself, and the examples are inconsistent with both parts of it.

In Exodus xix. 6. 9, the Hebrew word is used in its usual meaning as denoting words, and is rendered by the Septuagint both by λογος and ρημα. Moses laid before the people the very words of the Lord, and to denote these words the LXX use the two Greek words indifferently.

2 Sam. xi. 18. “Then Joab sent and told ‘David, all *the things* concerning the war.” Here the term in the original corresponding to *things*, may either be taken as signifying *things*, without any reference to words, or the *words of the war*, may be *words* giving an account of the war—*words* in the strict sense.

Psalms cv. 27. They shewed *the words* of his signs, that is, they used the words which God put into their mouth, by which the signs were perform-

ed. But in whatever way this phraseology is explained, it can have no bearing on the dispute.

Jer. i. 1. "The words of Jeremiah," &c. And what else are they than words? These words contained the things that he spoke. The LXX translate it, "The word of God that came upon 'Jeremiah,'" &c. using the word *ἔνμα*, and in the next verse using *λογος* for the same thing.

Amos i. 1. "The words of Amos." And the words of Amos they are, notwithstanding it is said that he *saw* them. This phraseology is to be understood on the same principle as that which speaks of seeing a voice. There was a vision; something was seen, which uttered things that were heard. Would it be more intelligible to substitute for the "words of Amos," *the combined speeches* of Amos, or "the *matter* conveyed in the tenor and total of 'the oral or written address, sermones, la parole of 'Amos?'" I think it would need as good glasses to see all this, as to see the words of the prophet.

Mark i. 45. "Blaze abroad the matter." Though the passage might be translated *the report*, that is, the report of the miracle, yet I have no objection to the common version, which is quite in accordance with what I have already advanced. But it is *matter*, or *thing*, without reference to words. It is not meaning contra-distinguished from words. It is not *matter* conveyed in the tenor and total of a written or oral address.

John iv. 37, 39. "And herein is that saying 'true,'—" "The saying of the woman." Very good proof, if Dr Smith had the misfortune to con-

tend with any so uninformed as to assert that *λογος* always signifies a single term, and not a number of terms in combination. He does not, however, find in us critics of this stamp. *λογος* we contend may signify one word, or a whole treatise. Is it of such a thing as this that Dr Smith presumes to say, that those who alleged an argument from the phraseology which he quotes, are probably unacquainted? Who is unacquainted with the fact that *λογος* has a multiplicity of meanings? None who are able to look for a word in a lexicon. But because the term *λογος* signifies a sentence, or saying, or report, &c. &c. cannot it signify words? Then the term *word* itself in English, could not signify *word*, for it is used for *saying*, or report, as well as *λογος*. Never was criticism more childish, with all its parade of Hebrew and Greek.

Acts i. 1. "*The former treatise account,*" &c. No man worth replying to, ever doubted such acceptations of the term *λογος*. But does not the term in this acceptation apply to every word in the treatise? If it was Luke's treatise, the words were the words of Luke; a treatise comprehends both words and matter. Strange indeed, if this should be opposed to the idea of verbal inspiration!

Acts xv. 32. "Exhorted the brethren with '*many words*, or much discourse.'" Did they exhort without words? The fact that *λογος* denotes combined speech, does not imply that words are

not included in it. If not, this has no bearing on the subject.

Acts xx. 7. "Continued his discourse." Why waste time with such allegations as this? I suppose his discourse consisted in words, and though the term *λογος* applies to the whole, all the parts are necessarily included in the whole.

1 Cor. i. 17. "Not with wisdom of words," or as in the margin, "of speech." Is it not the expression here that is directly referred to? 1 Cor. i. 18. "The preaching of the cross." This might be alleged to shew, that the term *λογος*, had other meanings, as well as that in which it denotes words, a thing that no man ever thought of calling in question. But does this say, that the term, when it signifies words, either singly or combined, cannot refer to expression?

In 1 Cor. ii. 1—4. *λογος* does not indeed denote a single word, but speech. But this is nothing to the purpose of Dr Smith. Speech is made up of single words, and the words of a speech are the words of the author of the speech. It would be absurd to say, that a speech was inspired, but that the words were not inspired. Is it not of expression, as distinguished from the thing expressed, that the apostle is here speaking?

In 1 Cor. xv. 2. The word is variously explained, but in no sense can it favour Dr Smith. Our translation is substantially good, though it overlooks something expressed in the original, which, indeed, can hardly be exactly given in an English version. *τινι λογω* in this place would, I think, be exactly

rendered by *qua ratione*, referring both to the doctrine preached, and the orderly connection and dependence of the parts of that doctrine. That both the ideas are included, is evident from the illustration which the Apostle himself gives of the expression, in the following verses. He states the different parts of his doctrine, and the order in which they are taught. "If ye remember *how* I preached the gospel to you," might not be far from expressing the ideas of the original. But how can this passage, in any sense of which it is capable, tend to prove that *λογος*, when applied to the Scriptures, cannot mean the expression as distinguished from the meaning? Is there any word perfectly univocal? Did any one ever suppose, that *λογος* had not a vast variety of meanings? Does Dr Smith mean to assert, that the meaning which it has here, it must have in these passages which are the subjects of dispute? He refers us to a number of examples in which he supposes we will find some wonderful discovery, of which till the time of his writing, we were not at all aware. That discovery, however, is known to any school-boy, as soon as he is able to trace the words of his lexicon. And worst of all, it has nothing to do with the subject. But I invite the reader especially to attend to the manner in which Dr Smith endeavours to neutralize the testimony of 1 Cor. ii. 13. This passage is so clear, that he is obliged to confess that it refers to expression, but by resolving expression into *expressions, style, manner*, he contrives to turn the reader's attention to the latter as

the only thing meant in the Apostle's assertion. "The passage 1 Cor. ii. 13," says he, "evidently 'refers to the expressions, style, and manner in which 'the Apostle taught the truths of the gospel; and it 'declares that he did not use splendid eloquence and 'oratorical arts, nor resort to any other kind of allurements to captivate hearers. (εν λογω Κολακειας, '1 Thess. ii. 5.—πλυστοις λογοις, 2 Pet. ii. 3;) but that 'he delivered his heavenly message in simplicity of 'diction, as taught and inspired by the Holy Spirit, '(Πνεύματικοις Πνευματικα συγγρηνηεις adapting spiritual (expressions) to spiritual subjects." Now, what can be fairer in appearance than this, if it is read without a critical eye? What can we demand more than is here admitted? And is not style the principle thing to which the Apostle refers? But there is management here that perverts the testimony of God. The art by which the writer quashes the evidence here is, by substituting something implied in what is said, for the thing that is actually said. It is of expression solely that the Apostle speaks. Style, manner, &c. are undoubtedly implied in this, but they are not the thing of which the assertion is made. Splendid eloquence and oratorical arts are unquestionably included in the denial, but they are not the thing of which the denial is made. They are included, because *expression* includes them; but it is of expression that the assertion is made. The apostle's words do not directly declare that he did not use splendid eloquence and oratorical arts. But this is one of the things implied in the declaration. The thing declared is,

that the apostle expressed divine truth, *not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Holy Spirit*. The assertion then is made of the expression or words directly, and respects style only as it is included in expression. The thing that he denies is not the using of flattery and simulation, according to 1 Thess. ii. 5., 2 Pet. ii. 3., but that *he spoke the truths of the Gospel in words taught by the wisdom of man*. That he did not use flattery and simulation is no doubt implied in this. What he asserts, is not "that he delivered 'his heavenly message in simplicity of diction,'" though this is implied in what he does assert; but that he *delivered his heavenly message in heavenly words*. The author then has uncorked the heavenly liquor, and presents it to us in a state quite evaporated and vapid. He has besides put an infusion into it calculated to deceive the eye and the taste. Here is a passage then, Dr Smith, that your instruments of torture cannot silence, nor force to prevaricate. It speaks of *words*, and whether these be considered as single terms, or expression as combined speech, it is *expression* directly distinguished from *meaning*. The Holy Ghost most plainly declares, that *the truths of the Gospel* were taught by the apostles *in his own words*. He speaks both of the matter and of the expression in this passage, and directly ascribes to the Holy Spirit the latter as distinguished from the former. No words could more expressly assert verbal inspiration. It is as clear that the words are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as that the things are ascribed to

him. Dr Smith, it is no easy thing to fight against the word of God. When you may think that you have stoned it to death, it will with Paul quickly stand upon its feet and testify against you as loudly as ever. You have done your utmost to murder this passage, but it rises up in judgment against you, and proclaims that the apostles *spoke the things of the Spirit in the words of the Spirit*. “WHICH ‘THINGS ALSO WE SPEAK, NOT IN THE WORDS ‘WHICH MAN’S WISDOM TEACHETH, BUT WHICH ‘THE HOLY GHOST TEACHETH.’ Can you look to the judgment seat of Christ, and deny that this asserts verbal inspiration? If you can, I do not envy you your conscience or your perspicacity.

With respect to the words Πνευμαλικας Πνευματικα συγχεροντες I am well enough pleased with the common version, in this instance, as in most others. But whatever is right, right Dr Smith’s version cannot be, “adapting spiritual (expressions) ‘to spiritual subjects.” 1. When an adjective is thus exhibited without its substantive, the substantive must be of the most general nature, and so obvious as to occasion no question as to what it is. *Things*, and neither *expressions* nor *subjects*, is the proper substantive. 2. It is necessary that the same substantive should be supplied to both words. *Expressions* cannot be supplied to the one, and *subjects* to the other. Let Dr Smith produce me an undoubted instance of similar syntax, and I will withdraw this objection. 3. Were such syntax allowable, I would translate the passage thus:—*Explaining or interpreting the things of the Spi-*

rit, in the words of the Spirit, a meaning both true and suited to the connection. But as I am convinced that such syntax is not warrantable, I will never attempt to force the word of God to support my views. I will not put one finger on the ark, though it should appear to be falling over a precipice. If God's word cannot support its own truths, let error prevail to the day of judgment. I stand quite at ease in defending my sentiments on all subjects of divine truth. I consider it my duty to establish them, and to convince others, by an exhibition of evidence as clear as I am able. But I will not *forg*e *proof*, were I assured of proselyting the world. It is not to please myself, that I adopt my views, and I cannot expect to please God by defending his truth with falsehood.

4. With respect to the word *συνκρίνω*, we might as well open an English book at random, and take any word that should first occur, as a translation, as take the word *adapting*. This is to make Scripture not to translate. Will Dr Smith be so good as to shew us where this word occurs in this acceptance?

5. Were there no other objection, the phrase *spiritual expressions* appears to be unwarrantable. What is a *spiritual expression*, as distinguished from the *things expressed*? Are there any expressions either as to words or phrases, of a spiritual nature abstracted from their meaning, or contra-distinguished from it? Is there any spiritual vocabulary, in any language? Did not the Apostles take the common words of the languages in which they spoke, and apply them

to express divine truth? If some fanatic had spoken about *spiritual expressions*, I would have known that he referred to the cant phrases of his party, but when I meet it in the writings of Dr Pye Smith, I cannot understand it.

Upon the whole then, this criticism of Dr Smith, is liable to the following objections. 1. It confounds two meanings of the word λογος, that are entirely distinct—namely, *combined speech*, and *matter, thing, cause, affair*. The examples in which it has the former meaning, refer to expression, as much as when it denotes single words; and in the latter signification, it has no reference to speech at all, either in expression or meaning. 2. it supposes that λογος when it refers to speech, always signifies combined speech, and never words, which is not fact. It may signify a treatise, but it may also signify a single word. 3. It plays on the sound of the word *matter*, and because it signifies the abstract idea *matter*, it is made to signify *matter*, as the meaning of words, two ideas as different as any two that can be conceived. The definition of the words דבר and λογος, uses the word *matter*, as signifying the meaning of an expression, the examples in which the words signify *matter*, all refer to *matter* in the abstract sense. The examples of course fail in proving that for which they are alleged. 4. Had it even been successful as to the words דבר and λογος, this would not have affected the evidence arising from the phraseology, in which “*speaking, saying, and the like, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of his*

‘servants.’ Yet the criticism professes to apply to this. 5. The criticism supposes that the signification of *combined speech*, is peculiar to the Hebrew and the Greek, whereas it is just as fully verified in English, as in either. The English term *word*, denotes a promise, a saying, a report, an account, short statement, or even the whole Scriptures. We say, *a man pledges his word, for he gives his promise, the word went abroad, for the report spread*—I will ask you *one word*, for *one question*—*In a word*, for *in short*—the *word of God*, for *the Bible*, &c. Dr Smith’s criticism then, is just as if a foreigner finding our term *word* as signifying, a *saying*, *report*, &c. should venture to assert that it never signified single terms, but denotes combined speech, the matter conveyed in the *tenor* and *total* of an oral or written address. Any school boy speaking the English language would laugh at such a criticism. Yet, in dead languages, it passes for the most profound erudition. 6. Lastly, I object to this criticism, because the author does not shew the bearing of the examples on the point at issue. Had he done so, he must have left himself more open to assault, or have discovered his error. But by a mere general reference to passages, he commits himself as little as possible; and most readers will be more inclined to take the argument on trust, than have the labour of scrutinizing the proof. By this means also, he may puzzle many whom he cannot satisfy.

But it is an unhallowed task Dr Smith has

undertaken. It is a wretched thing to toil in endeavouring to shew how little the Scriptures deserve to be called the word of God. His first attempt has miserably failed; and if it is only in this feeble way he intends to sustain our charge, it is a virtual confession of defeat.

STRICTURES

ON

DR DICK'S ESSAY ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

I AM surprised to find in Dr Dick's Essay on the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, a recognition of the mischievous distinctions which have laid a foundation for so much error and confusion on this plain subject. The author is not chargeable to the same extent with any of those whose works I have been reviewing; nor is it his design in any measure to lower the Scriptures in accommodation to Neological illumination. On the contrary, he rather adopts than vindicates the distinctions; and his admissions unfavourable to full verbal inspiration, are rather concessions that he cannot refuse, than assertions which it gives him pleasure to substantiate. Of course, though I acquit him of treason, I cannot clear him of incompetency. I must arraign him as having surrendered a fortress which he might have held, had he made the best advantages

of the munitions of war, with which the royal arsenals were abundantly supplied.

In some respects his work is more dangerous to the unsuspecting Christian, than the worst of the kind; for while he substantially gives up proper inspiration with respect to many things both as to matter and words, he speaks decidedly and strongly in reprehension of partial inspiration. The reader is led to think that no higher inspiration can be thought of, than that vindicated by the author.

On the nature and designations of the distinctions in inspiration, he quarrels with the common views; but as long as he adopts them substantially, he is involved in the same error. He divides the kinds or degrees of inspiration into three classes. "1.

' There are many things in the Scriptures, which
' the writers might have known, and probably did
' know, by ordinary means." "2. There are other

' passages of Scripture, in composing which, the
' minds of the writers must have been supernaturally
' endowed with more than ordinary vigour." "3.

' It is manifest, with respect to many passages of
' Scripture, that the subjects of which they treat,
' must have been directly revealed to the writers."

Let us attend to these in order. With respect to the first, he says, "As persons possessed of memory, judgment, and the other intellectual faculties which are common to men, they were able to relate events in which they had been concerned; and to make such occasional reflections as were suggested by particular subjects and occurrences."

Now this is very true, but would such relations be

entitled to be called the word of God? Could it be said, that they were given by inspiration of God? Such relations might be true, but they are not inspired. "In these cases," says the author, "no 'supernatural influence was necessary to enlighten and invigorate their minds; it was only necessary that they should be infallibly preserved from error.'" Necessary for what? If it be necessary to produce a true narrative, this is just. But if the assertion is, that this is all that is necessary to entitle the narrative to be called the word of God, the thing must be strongly denied. A narrative that has nothing more than this cannot be said to be "written by inspiration." "They did not need 'a revelation," says he, "to inform them of what had passed before their eyes, nor to point out those inferences and moral maxims, which were obvious to every attentive and considerate observer." Very true, they did not indeed need any information with respect to what they knew. But in recording what they saw before their eyes, they must relate that only which is given them by the Holy Ghost, in the very words of the Holy Ghost, if their narrative is to be the word of God, and be characterized as given by inspiration. "Moses could tell," says he, "without a divine afflatus, that on such a night the Israelites marched out of Egypt, and at such a place they murmured before God; and Solomon could remark, that "a soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger," &c. No doubt of it; but if such facts in the narrative of Moses, have been told

without a divine afflatus, they are not a part of the Scriptures; and if Solomon had nothing but his own spirit in recording these moral maxims, they may be true, but are not entitled to be received as dictates of inspiration. Inspiration is not necessary to constitute true information, but surely inspiration is necessary for every thing that is said to be inspired. Can a thing be inspired without inspiration? ^x The author indeed afterwards asserts that such things require more than superintendence. "In the passages of Scripture," says he, "which we are now considering, I conceive the writers to have been not merely superintended, that they might commit no error, but likewise to have been moved or excited by the Holy Ghost to record particular events, and set down particular observations." So far this is in the right path: but it does not go far enough. The Holy Ghost not only pointed out the particular events and observations, but if the account can be called inspired, the whole matter and language must be God's. ⁴¹ The writers of Scripture were not like amanuenses, as this author represents them, copying such things as have been selected for them by their employer, but writing as he dictated. There is indeed something in the case that cannot be represented by an amanuensis. The sacred writers are rational instruments, through the operations of whose minds, God communicates his will. That the Almighty is able to speak his mind in this way, so that the same thing will be the writing of men

x At page 42 it is said of the Scriptures, "They must be inspired in thought, word, and style". - Page 71 "The letter of Cleodemus Lysias was not inspired; but it is inserted in the Scriptures by inspiration." In this letter then according to Mr. Barrow we have inspiration I suppose in the words. It is acknowledged not to be in thought. That is in plain terms we have here and in the opinion of Gamaliel, and probably in many other places - Inspiration not inspired. See Haldane page 98.

and the word of God, is quite possible. The mode in which it is done, it is not for us to inquire.

Let us now glance at the second distinction, which is the invigorating of the memory and judgment. This is quite foreign to the question of the inspiration of the Scriptures. That some things in Scripture are not beyond the reach of the most ordinary talents; and that others could not have been produced by the highest order of created intellect, is very true. It is admitted also, that passages of the former class do not contain the evidence of their own inspiration; and that the inspiration of the latter is self-evident. Dr Dick produces many passages that most clearly prove their inspiration by their sublimity; but that there are innumerable passages that do not prove their divine origin by any intrinsic elevation, no one will dispute. In such a view the distinction is good. But if it can be said of the passages of the latter class, that they are all given by inspiration of God, they must as truly be the work of God as the former. An uninspired man might have written the account of Ananias and Sapphira; but if it is Scripture, it is as much the work of God, as the description of the horse in the book of Job. It does not follow, that man, without inspiration, wrote every thing in the Scriptures, which might have been written without inspiration. Some things in Milton might have been written by an ordinary poet, but the meanest things in *Paradise Lost* are as much the work of Milton, as the most sublime flights of genius. As a matter of fact then, though a man's writings may display more or less

ability, they cannot be more or less his ; and if all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, no Scripture can be more or less inspired than another, though different parts may contain in themselves more or less evidence of inspiration. It may be said that God has discovered himself in some passages, and in others he has not discovered himself. But if all Scripture is given by inspiration, no passage can be more or less inspired. A writer cannot be more or less the author of any part of a work, of every part of which he is said to be the author. If every part of Scripture which might have been written without inspiration, was actually written without inspiration, then such parts cannot be said to be inspired. On the other hand, if such parts were written by inspiration, they are on a level with every other part, as to inspiration. That this invigoration of mind is no kind or degree of the inspiration of Scripture, is farther evident from the consideration, that the highest measures of it might have been given to the sacred writers, while not a sentence of their writing might have been inspired. To inspire a man with vigour of intellect, is quite a different thing from inspiring him with a communication. Now, it is not the writers of Scriptures who are said to be inspired, but their writings are said to be inspired. " All Scripture is given by inspiration." A writer might indeed be inspired to write one thing, and he might write another without inspiration. But this supposition is excluded as to the Scriptures, since the inspiration is asserted, not of the writers, but of the writings. A writer might

be inspired with genius and vigour, while every sentence written by him might be altogether uninspired. A mere simpleton might become a Milton, or even might obtain such vigour as to enable him to equal the sublimity of the book of Job ; while not a sentence written by him could be called the word of God, or said to be given by inspiration of God. The invigorating of the minds of the writers of Scripture, therefore, is no kind or degree of the inspiration of Scripture. Whatever parts of the Scripture, therefore, are the production of men supernaturally invigorated, are not the word of God, are not inspired in any sense. Were God to enable a child to write a poem superior to the Iliad, would that poem be the book of God ? Could it be said to be written by the inspiration of God ? God had indeed qualified the child to write the book, but the book was still the production of the child, and could in no sense be called God's, any more than it could be said that God built the city of Glasgow. God has given to all men the talents which they possess. This, however, does not entitle their writings to be called his. And the case is quite the same in this respect, whether the talents be natural, or an extraordinary gift.

With respect to the third distinction, it is true that while some things were fully known to the writers, other things could not be known but by immediate revelation. But this is not the question. The question is, whether things that could be known by natural means, were written without inspiration, or written by an inspiration different in kind from

that which records the things known only by revelation, or inferior in degree to it. It required no inspiration to teach a man what he knew; but it required inspiration to write such an account of this as could be called the word of God, or be said to be written by inspiration. Any spectator at the tomb of Lazarus, was fit to say "Jesus wept;" but if it can be said that this is Scripture, and if it is true, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" it required as much inspiration to write, "Jesus wept," as to record what was said of the things, "which eyes had not seen, and ear had not heard." An uninspired man might have said "Jesus wept!" But if the Evangelist said it without inspiration, it is not Scripture. As it is Scripture, and as all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, we are entitled to say that the Holy Ghost has said "Jesus wept," as well as to say, that the Holy Ghost has said, "Unto us a child is born," &c. There is no more inspiration in the one account than there is in the other. The great mistake on this subject has arisen from considering inspiration as it respects the inspired person; whereas the inspiration asserted 2 Tim. iii. 16, respects the things written. Now, if every part of a writing be given by inspiration, no part of it can be uninspired, or differently inspired. In the relation of the most ordinary fact, God must have given every word of the account, else it cannot be said to be given by his inspiration. Every part of it is the word of God, and the inspiration that records the deepest mysteries cannot go beyond this. Inspira-

tion, as it respects the inspired persons, might have many degrees. Two might be inspired with the knowledge of some things equally, while one of them might be inspired with the knowledge of many things unrevealed to the other. But the question is not, whether one man may not have been more inspired than another, but whether one part of Scripture is more inspired than another. The question is independent even of the truth or falsehood of the thing recorded by inspiration. The inspiration of the account of Satan's lie in deceiving our first parents, is as great as that which records the promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent."

It has arisen entirely from viewing inspiration as it respects the inspired persons, and not the things written by them, that it has appeared absurd to speak of inspiration with respect to what was known by natural means, and that could have been written without inspiration, or without revelation. To avoid this absurdity, some have denied inspiration with respect to some things, while others, with more reverence for the Scriptures, contrived such distinctions in the word, as to suit the various cases. But this difficulty does not at all present itself when the question is properly stated. It is not said that the sacred writers were inspired with knowledge which they previously possessed. But it is said their accounts of every thing recorded by them are given by inspiration; and this is as true with respect to things previously known by them, as it is with respect to things communicated by revelation.

When they wrote what they knew, and could of themselves have expressed, both the matter and the words were God's, as much as when they wrote what they did not understand. There was no need to be inspired with the knowledge of what they knew, but every word in their account of this, may be by inspiration.

The author himself reasons in this way, when dealing with those who maintain partial inspiration. "The notion of a partial inspiration," says he, in a note, "seems to have arisen from the want of distinct ideas on the subject. A false meaning is annexed to the term; and then it is easy to shew that it cannot be applied to every part of Scripture. Inspiration is supposed to signify the supernatural communication of knowledge to the mind; and if this were the only sense of the word, it would be true, that inspiration was not necessary to enable men to relate what they knew by ordinary means." So far the observation is just. But in what follows, the writer labours under a mistake, as great as that which he censures. "But if," says he, "we understand by inspiration, the general assistance afforded to the sacred writers according to the exigency of the case, and which supplied the want of knowledge, or rendered it correct, or excited the person to communicate it, and presided over his thoughts and expressions, it may be affirmed, that simple historians were inspired as well as prophets," &c. *If we understand by inspiration the general assistance, &c.! That is, if we understand inspiration*

to mean what it does not mean, which in no instance it can be shewn to mean, and which it cannot mean; if we suppose inspiration to mean any thing we choose to take out of it, then the case will have no difficulty. A general assistance is not inspiration. Did it not occur to the writer, that if *assistance* inspiration is a general ~~assertion~~ of the Holy Spirit, according to exigency, then it might be alleged by Socinians, that there is not in Scripture any need of that inspiration which he terms revelation. If the word, to serve *his* purpose, may be taken at so small an amount, what will oblige others, on any occasion, to take it at a higher value? The just way to answer those who labour under the above mistake, is not to lower the meaning of the word, but to shew that inspiration is asserted of every part of the Scriptures; and not that the sacred writers were inspired to know what they previously knew. When an amanuensis writes an account of a death for a newspaper, he may write by dictation, as well as when he records a new theory. In like manner, when the sacred writers wrote an account of things with which they were fully acquainted, they wrote what the Spirit dictated, and in the words of the Spirit.

Here then, I distinctly charge Dr Dick with surrendering a post to the enemy, that will enable him to make himself master of the field. This concession virtually gives up inspiration. A general assistance according to exigency, is not inspiration. I call on Dr Dick to shew what part of the instructions of his royal Master warrants him to

explain inspiration in so lax a sense. Is it optional with us to attach any meaning that suits us, to the words of Scripture? If a general assistance according to exigency is inspiration, then the Christian minister speaks by inspiration in the pulpit; then indeed, all Christians are inspired, for they have a promise of assistance according to exigency. What then, is Dr Dick's defence of inspiration, but an effort to retain the name, at the expence of surrendering the thing. Dr Dick's Bible is not the word of God. Many parts of it are the work of man, with slight assistance from God. Is this the treatise that has so long been considered as a standard on the subject of inspiration? Surely the Christian public are slightly acquainted with this important subject, else such a work could not meet their approbation. Can any Christian bear the idea, that the Bible has been composed by men, enjoying only a general assistance from God, according to exigency? If this is true, then why may not others allege, that as in their opinion there is no exigency for any thing of the nature of inspiration in the strict sense of the word, there is nothing of it to be found in the Scriptures. A mere invigoration of the memory and judgment, was all that was necessary for men to produce the Bible. How easy a thing it is to mislead the public! Let a Neologian declare, from a pulpit in Edinburgh or Glasgow, that the Scriptures are not inspired, and his blasphemy will shock all minds. But let an orthodox divine explain the word inspiration in a sense that equally denies the proper

idea contained in it, and it is likely he will be admired as a deep theologian, who has happily arrived at the philosophy of an abstruse question, and an able vindicator of *the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*. I call on Dr Dick to reconsider his concessions on this all-important subject, and to cease to rob us of the book of God. He has taken from us God's book, and we cannot be content, though he has left a good book in its stead.

"They had the Bible. Hast thou ever heard
Of such a book? The author God himself,"—*Pollock*,

"From the preceding statement," says our author, "it appears, that we do not apply the term 'inspiration, in the same sense to the whole of 'Scripture.'" And why do you not, Dr Dick? What authority have you for giving two senses to the word in the same occurrence? A word may have two senses, or more, in different situations; but this makes the passage, 2 Tim. iii. 16, give two senses to the word in the same place. With respect to some things, it must be revelation; with respect to others, only assistance; and an assistance infinitely varied according to circumstances. Was ever any thing more arbitrary than this? The author speaks of partial inspiration as implying "a 'distinction perfectly arbitrary, having no foundation on any thing said by the sacred writers themselves.'" But is it more arbitrary than his own distinction in this meaning of this word? Can any

distinction have less foundation in any thing said by the sacred writers themselves? Does he not give two senses to the same word in the same occurrence? Does he not give it a meaning which it never has—a meaning perfectly inconsistent with its true import?

This mode of defending a doctrine by a double sense of a word in the same place, is the perfection of the skill of the Jesuitical defenders of Popery. When an antagonist unskilled in their mode of fighting, comes forward with a muster of texts, that he expects from their clearness will utterly confound and silence, if they do not convince, is himself confounded, when he finds that all his proofs are at once both admitted and denied by the help of this mode of explanation. To overturn all the self-righteous refuges of superstition, he thunders out the words—"The blood of Jesus Christ 'cleanses from all sin,' convinced that there is no way of escape. But with the greatest coolness it is promptly replied, "Very true; the Church of 'Rome never taught any other doctrine than this. 'The blood of Jesus Christ, and nothing but the 'blood of Jesus Christ, does indeed cleanse from 'all sin; that is, Christ's blood takes away the eternal punishment of our sins; but there remains the 'temporal punishment due to our sins, which we 'must suffer for ourselves, either here or hereafter." And verily, if Dr Dick is justified in explaining the word inspiration in 2 Tim. iii. 16, in two senses,

the same liberty cannot be denied to the doctrines of Popery.

But let us hear the writer's reason for not giving this word the same sense with respect to all the inspired writings. "Because," says he, "the same 'degree of assistance was not necessary in the composition of every part of it.'" Then the Bible is not the book of God, but a book composed by man, with less or more of God's assistance, according as it was needed. If it be the word of God, if every part of it can justly be said to be given by inspiration of God, the whole must, in the same sense, be God's. There is no more authority to give two senses to the word inspiration in the same place, than there is to give two senses to the word God, and to say, that 2 Tim. iii. 16, asserts that some of the Scriptures are a revelation from the true God, and that other parts of them have been inspired by the god of this world. A book composed by God's assistance, could not be said to be given by inspiration of God. Dr Dick's Sermons, I hope, are compositions of this kind; but, I dare say, he does not pretend to inspiration. This is deeply erroneous language, Dr Dick. This is a solution of a difficulty as to inspiration, that destroys inspiration itself. While it vindicates the name of inspiration, as applied to all the Scriptures; it not only expressly excludes much of them from proper inspiration, but lays a foundation for the denial of it as to all. The Bible is not a good book written by God's assistance; but is God's own book, of which he is the *very author*, in as true a sense, as Dr

Dick is the author of this Essay on Inspiration. Much of it, indeed, respects ordinary matters; but even this is his as truly, and as fully, as the rest. Though the writers might have related many things in their own language without God, yet as a matter of fact, they did not write any thing without him; for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." This is my polar star on this question. As long as my eye is upon it, I do not fear to steer my course with safety. By losing sight of this, Dr Dick has got himself entangled in the theories of human wisdom, those hallucinations that promise a refuge to the unwary mariner, but hide rocks and quicksands under a vapoury surface.

"In some parts," says Dr Dick, "if I may speak so, there is more of God than in others." Doubtless. But in what sense is this? A sense nothing to the purpose of your argument, Dr Dick. There is certainly more of God, in those passages that reveal the divine character, than in those parts that speak of temporal things. But this is not the question. If God is the author of every part of the Bible, there is no part of it, of which he can be said to be more the author than another. But let us hear the writer's own illustration. "When a prophet predicts the events of futurity, or an apostle makes known the mysteries of redemption, it is God alone who speaks; and the voice or the pen of a man, is merely the instrument employed for the communication of his will." Now this illustration is not at all warranted from the Scriptures. Man is a rational instrument in delivering

the doctrines of salvation, and speaks in his own proper person, using his own arguments and illustrations, as much as when he relates facts that occurred before his own eyes. Indeed, it is man that directly speaks, and it is only from Scripture testimony that we learn that the doctrines, arguments, illustrations and language of the apostle, are the doctrines, arguments, illustrations and language of God. And "when Moses relates the miracles of Egypt, and the journeys of the Israelites in the Wilderness, or the Evangelists relate the history of Christ," they speak only what God gave them, or in the words which he gave them, though "they tell nothing but what they formerly knew." Dr Dick says, that "without the assistance of the Spirit, they could not have told it so well." But this is giving up inspiration, and substituting assistance in its place. Without divine assistance a man cannot preach so well. But this is not inspiration. If, in such instances, it is lawful for Dr Dick to scoop out the meaning of the word, and substitute a fancy of his own in its place, others may with equal propriety allege that such assistance was all that was necessary to record the documents of our salvation. If such assistance is inspiration as to some things, why may it not be inspiration as to others? Inspiration was not given merely to enable the sacred writers to tell their story well, but that their narrative might be the true word of God. Dr Dick's Bible, then, is quite a different book from mine. My Bible is God's book, which God himself has made; yea, every part of which he has made.

How lamentable is it to find the writer of an essay long recognized as a standard on the subject of inspiration, avowing that much of his Bible is the work of man, assisted according to exigency by God ! Dr Dick has written an Essay on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, in which he virtually gives up the inspiration of much of them. To speak of plenary inspiration with such views, is to hold the word and to renounce the thing signified by it.

“ In some cases,” says the Bishop of Lincoln, as quoted with approbation by this author, “ inspiration only produced correctness and accuracy ‘ in relating past occurrences, or in reciting the ‘ words of others.” Now is this all that inspiration does in the cases alluded to ? Do the narrators of sacred history select their facts, or recite the language of others without God ? But even more than this, I affirm, is imported in inspiration, even in reporting that Judas hanged himself. The meaning expressed, and the expression itself, have God for their author, else it could not be said, “ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” 2 Tim. iii. 16. is of more weight with me, than that of all the speculations of human wisdom.

It is obvious, that the Bishop of Lincoln speaks here of the inspiration of the writers of Scripture, whereas the question respects the inspiration of the Scriptures. The common confounding of these two things has produced much of that confusion in which the subject is involved, and has driven writers to unscriptural distinctions in the meaning of the word. The sacred writers had no need to be in-

spired with the knowledge of facts which they already knew, but to make their relations the word of God, they must all be given by his inspiration, both in matter and language. This distinction is confounded by Dr Dick. While his work is entitled an Essay on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, he begins by defining inspiration, as it relates to the inspired writers. and not as it relates to the things written by them. "I define inspiration," says he, "to be an influence of the Holy Ghost
 ' on the understandings, imaginations, memories, and
 ' other mental powers of the sacred writers, by
 ' which they were qualified to communicate to the
 ' world the knowledge of the will of God." Now, if instead of giving a definition, independent of Scripture authority, he had simply referred to the passage 2 Tim. iii. 16, that asserts inspiration, and gives an exhibition and illustration of the meaning of the Greek word as used in the passage, he would necessarily have been led into the right path. For here inspiration respects the Scriptures; and all Scriptures is equally said to possess it. But inspiration as it respects inspired persons may be various in degree to any extent that may please God. This is one of the many instances, in which the worst effects proceed from considering questions with respect to divine truth in an abstract manner, without any reference to the passages on which they are founded. On this subject there was no need of a human definition of the term. It would have been much more useful to exhibit the meaning of the word with any illustration that might be afford-

ed by the use of it in Greek writers. The *υπνοι θεοπνευστοι*, or *inspired dreams* of the heathen would have given us a more precise idea of the meaning of the term, than the most accurate abstract definition. In treating of the inspiration of the Scriptures, there is no necessity to enter into discussions about the divine operation on the faculties of their mind. This is not the subject. On this there is nothing revealed, and all definitions with respect to this, must therefore be the work of fancy. That the Holy Ghost spake and wrote through man, is a fact attested by the Scriptures, but how he influenced their minds, we are not informed. It is not then to be expected that we are to obtain much light on the subject, from the definitions of divines. The only proper definition, is a definition of the word, that is, an explanation of the word as it is used in the language.

This writer does not expressly deny verbal inspiration in the fullest extent, but the theory which he favours does not require this; and with respect to some things, he considers that it does not exist. *Infallible direction* is what he pleads for on this point. Now direction is not inspiration, though it might equally secure a fair representation of truth. And I complain, that he does not rest verbal inspiration on its main evidence, 2 Tim. iii. 16. There are many other sound and substantial arguments, and these the author states in a very convincing manner. But the direct and main evidence, which applies to every case is 2 Tim. iii. 16., which I have not observed among the author's

proofs of verbal inspiration. "All Scripture is given
 ' by inspiration of God." The writing is the
 thing whose inspiration is asserted. It cannot then
 be a question whether words belong to a writing.
 It is by overlooking this and treating of inspiration
 as it respects the sacred writers that false theories
 have originated. It is this that has led the author
 to such concessions as this. "With respect to other
 ' passages of Scripture, and particularly those which
 ' treat of such subjects as might have been known
 ' without revelation, it is not necessary to main-
 ' tain, that the language was inspired precisely in
 ' the same sense as in those already considered."
 After what I have already said, it cannot be neces-
 sary to spend time in shewing, that if such things
 are inspired at all, they must be inspired precisely
 in the same sense with every thing else that is said
 to be inspired. What I would observe now is, that
 such assertions as this, result from holding the ne-
 cessity of inspiration on general principles only, and
 not on the expressed testimony of the Scriptures
 themselves. As long as we believe verbal inspira-
 tion on the authority of its general necessity only,
 it is obvious that to this general necessity there may
 be exceptions. And here are the exceptions.
 There are some things that do not seem to need
 this verbal inspiration. But if we look to the tes-
 timony of Scripture, 2 Tim. iii. 16. we will find
 that it demands the same inspiration in every part
 of the word of God.

"We may conceive," says he, "the sacred wri-
 ' ters to have been permitted more freely to exer-

‘cise their own faculties.” 2 Tim. iii. 16., does not permit us, Dr Dick, to roam at large on this subject, and to indulge our own random conceptions. But the fullest inspiration by no means implies any constraint in the exercise of the faculties of the sacred writers. They were as free on the doctrine of atonement, as in historical facts. “The words,” says he, “were not formally dictated any more ‘than the sentiments.” This virtually gives up the inspiration of such parts of Scripture both as to words and sentiments, and substitutes something else in its stead. We can know nothing of the process of inspiration on any subject. “But they seemed,” says he, “to proceed like other historians ‘and moralists, and to express themselves in their ‘natural manner.” They did so on the doctrines of salvation as well as in the relation of the most trivial facts. Paul used his natural manner in the Epistle to the Romans, as well as Luke in his account of Paul’s shipwreck.

It would have been an essential advantage to this essay, had the author treated inspiration as a matter of revelation merely. This would not only have given a greater unity to the work, but would have led to a fuller exhibition of what the Scriptures actually teach on the subject. In exhibiting directly the meaning and bearings of all the passages that reveal any thing on this point, the full extent of verbal inspiration could not have lain hid; and a fuller scope would have been given for a reply to objections. In vindicating inspiration, there certainly was no more necessity for a vindication of

miracles, and the exhibition of the general evidence of the authenticity of the Scriptures, than there would have been, had the subject been the incarnation or the atonement. Inspiration is as much a matter of revelation, as justification by faith. Both stand equally on the authority of the Scriptures. In teaching and defending the doctrine of inspiration, then, the authenticity of the Scriptures as a revelation from God, should have been taken for granted; and the contest should not have been with Hume and Gibbon, but with Priestley and the evangelical theologians, who speak of partial inspiration. The authenticity of the Scriptures, and their inspiration, are quite different questions. Multitudes who receive the Scriptures as containing a revelation from God, deny their inspiration, or modify it, so as in effect to destroy it. With these solely, and not with deists, the battle of inspiration ought to be fought. It was not a little surprising then to me, to find a considerable portion of this Essay taken up with the infidel, and still more surprising to meet the following observation:—"Paul affirms, in the Second Epistle to Timothy, that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God;' but every person must be sensible, that this assertion is not in itself a sufficient ground for believing the inspiration of the writings to which he refers." And what other ground can you have, Dr Dick, for believing inspiration? Is not the authority of Paul as fully able to establish inspiration, as to establish the doctrine of the Trinity? It is true, indeed, that the Scriptures themselves

must first be established; but this is equally true with respect to every other doctrine. Would any writer think it necessary in establishing the doctrine of salvation by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to vindicate miracles, and establish the authenticity of the Scriptures? Certainly not; because the people with whom he contends admit this. In like manner, those who deny or modify inspiration, admit the Scriptures as containing a revelation from God, and it is a waste of time to argue this point with them. True, indeed, the infidel denies inspiration, but he denies also the authenticity; and it is useless to vindicate the former till the latter is established. Indeed, there is no way of establishing inspiration, but by the Scriptures; and Scripture authority will not pass with the infidel. I am aware, that many arguments for inspiration may be founded on the authenticity, and that it is evident, that if the Scriptures are authentic, they must be inspired. But I do not blame the author for taking advantage of arguments of this kind. On the contrary, I fully approve of his conduct on this point. But he might have equally availed himself of all such arguments, taking the authenticity for granted. What I mean is, that a work on inspiration ought to have treated the subject as a matter of revelation, as much as a treatise on faith or redemption; and that by acting on another principle, the author has produced confusion in his work, and has unjustly degraded inspiration, as if it must be received on different grounds from those on which the other doctrines of revelation are

rested. The Scriptures are as much an ultimate authority on this question, as any other question of revealed truth. A very considerable proportion of this work is not at all on the subject of its title.

I cannot conclude my remarks without extracting an observation from the preface to this work, which appears to me true, striking, and important. "An attentive observer," says Dr Dick, "cannot have failed to remark a very striking peculiarity of the present times. It is the influence of the principles of infidelity upon many professors of the Christian religion. The bold opposition made to some doctrines of revelation, renders them ashamed or afraid to own them, without at least such qualification and changes, as shall smooth their asperities and lessen their apparent incredibility. In some instances such concessions are made, as amount to a complete surrender of the point in debate. The inspiration of the Scriptures is an article of our faith, against which infidels have directed all the arguments which their ingenuity could furnish, and all the abuse which their malice could invent. What is the consequence? Many professed champions of Christianity seem to have concluded that the article is not tenable, because it has been previously assailed; and accordingly, they have abandoned it wholly, or in part to the enemy. Few writers, indeed, who now undertake to defend the cause of revelation, hold the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. That idea has become unfashionable; it is classed with other opinions of our fathers, which are ex-

‘ ploded as the dreams of enthusiasm and superstitious credulity ; and he only is supposed to entertain rational sentiments on the subject, who looks upon the Sacred Books as partly human and partly divine ; as a heterogeneous compound of the oracles of God, and the stories and sentiments of men.” “ The spirit of infidelity is working among Christians themselves.”

The application of this to the works which I have reviewed, is perfectly obvious. Some evangelical divines of the present day, unlike their unpromising predecessors, have endeavoured to reconcile the favour of the world with the cross of Christ. By the perfection of their wisdom, they think they have succeeded in finding a way to declare the counsel of God substantially, without exciting the mortal enmity of the world, as constantly happened from the less skilful address of Christ and the Apostles. If the gospel cannot conquer the obstinacy of the infidel, skilful management, it is thought, may make them peaceable neighbours. It was quite imprudent then, in the Apostle to act on the principle of not “ shunning to declare the whole counsel of God.” Had he acted towards the philosophers of his day, as some evangelical divines have towards the learned Neologians, instead of being accounted a “ babbler,” he might have been treated as *the learned and liberal introducer of a new science*. And if, instead of denouncing all the opposers of his doctrines as the enemies of God, he had proposed his scheme as deep speculations to exercise the ingenuity of the

wise, he might have been hailed as another Socrates.

While I gladly acquit Dr Dick of this compromising spirit, I must charge his Essay with the same radical errors as the other systems. He admits the same mischievous distinctions, that are only another name for denying proper inspiration to a great part of the Scriptures. The inspiration which he avows, has "such qualifications and changes, as smooth its asperities, and lessen its apparent incredibility." In some instances, such concessions are made, as amount to a complete surrender of the point in debate. "Inspiration he has abandoned in part to the enemy." He indeed undertakes to defend "the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures;" but it is only *the name* which he extends in a plenary manner. He concedes as explicitly as any other writer, that the word does not apply in the same sense to all parts of the Scriptures, which is virtually to deny the inspiration of such parts. He does not indeed, like Mr Daniel Wilson, "look upon the Sacred Books as partly human, and partly divine;" but I was surprised to find in reading Dr Dick's Essay, that Mr Daniel Wilson was not the first who speaks of *nature ending, and revelation beginning*, with reference to inspiration. When I first found this distinction in Mr Wilson's Lectures, I little expected to discover afterwards, that the original honours of this infidel phraseology, belong to the Essay on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. If Dr Dick is justified in speaking of nature, as going a certain length

in the composition of the Bible, I cannot see why he should condemn those who "look upon the ' Sacred Books as partly human and partly divine."

In the part which I have taken in the controversy on Inspiration, it has given me great pain that I have been obliged to contend with the real friends of the Lord Jesus, on a subject in which all believers might be expected to harmonize. From various circumstances, it is not surprising, that in many things there should be difference of views among Christians. But what can be the temptation to lower the character of the word of God? Might it not be expected, that all would unite in exalting the perfection of our common standard? What is it that operates in the mind of a believer to induce him to toil in degrading the oracles of heaven?

In the investigation of all subjects connected with revelation, though I do not overlook the importance of bringing the Christian public along with me, yet my first study is accurately to ascertain and exhibit the mind of God. I never think of measuring my conclusions with the limits assigned by the learned. When I see truth, I am not ashamed to avow it, nor afraid to defend it. And the cross of adhering to it, few have felt more heavy, or have greater temptations to throw it away. Yet while I spare not error, my love to those in error is not abated. My brotherhood ex-

tends not to party, but to the whole household of God. While I labour to unfold truth, I presume not to dictate; and though a Christian should reject every thing which I hold, but the way of salvation through faith, in the righteousness of the Son of God, I will receive him, as I trust God for Christ's sake, has received me.

In reasoning from Scripture on this subject of inspiration, and on every other, it is of great importance that we never lose sight of the tremendous responsibility which we incur. It is no light matter to attempt to influence the belief of the people of God, with respect to subjects on which he has expressed his mind. It is a fearful thing to labour to misrepresent the divine testimony in any matter. It is bad to err, but it is worse to exert ourselves to pervert others. On the other hand, it is a delightful idea, to be in any measure instrumental in leading forward the minds of the Lord's people, to a more full understanding of his word. Nothing but the conviction that I am pleading the cause of God and truth, could console me in opposing so many distinguished writers on the nature of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. I rise from my labours, myself much edified and confirmed, and with an increasing zeal to convince all my fellow christians. And why should I not hope that the most exalted views of the word of God shall prevail? It is not a party question. Many of all parties seem inadequately acquainted with the subject. But there is no obstacle to prevent any from embracing the most

honourable views of the oracles of God. Though, therefore, the children of the Most High may unhappily continue to differ in many things; in this one thing all may be expected to unite. Let us all celebrate the perfections of our common standard—the Bible.

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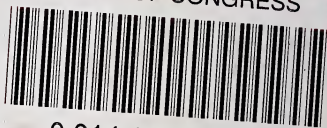
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